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# FERVENT PRAYER.

By the Rev. Walter Lock, M.A. (Keble College).*

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—St. James v. 16.

NOT long ago the Principal of a Theological College, who was accustomed to receive University graduates as his students, was asked the question—"What would you most like done for your students while at the Universities? How could they be best prepared here?" The answer was, "I think the chief thing which they want is to be taught *how to pray*." It was a startling and indeed humiliating answer to us. Those of us who are Christians—and of course it is only of such that he was speaking—fancied that we had been taught how to pray from our childhood; and yet, if it is true that "every prayer should become a real work of art, as it expresses our best feelings," then prayer will have its rules of art, its methods, times, order, symmetry; and of course it must be true that the child's prayers will need very much expansion and deepening before they can be the worthy utterance of the man. To attempt to face the perplexities and difficulties of

* Preached at St. Mary's, Oxford.

manhood with the mere child's prayers is like attempting to translate some difficult Greek author, with no other help than the glossary of a primer. I will venture, then, to say a few words on that one form of prayer of which my text speaks—of our prayers for others, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray *one for another*, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

The words of the Greek are far more expressive than this translation, *πολὺ ἰσχύει δέησις δικαίου ἐνεργουμένη*. A great force is the praying of a righteous man, in its activity, as it puts itself into action. Prayer is regarded as passing out from the lips and being condensed into deeds. In what ways can this be done?

Before we attempt to answer this question, let us remind ourselves that intercessory prayer is but one part of the great system of intercession on which human life is organised. Intercession—it is simply "a coming in between": we know the word well in Roman political history, as the tribune's veto. The Patricians propose some law that seems likely to injure the people: the tribune *intercedes*: he stands between the people and the threatened danger; and their rights are saved. Again, a great patrician general has become the object of the envy and ill-will of the populace: he is brought to trial: he is in danger of being banished from the country which he has saved. A Tiberius Gracchus intercedes, and Scipio Africanus is saved. In its widest sense it may be applied to every act in which one human being

is able to come in *between* another and some evil that might befall him. Nay, we may extend it even more widely still to the whole principle of mediation, by which one man is used to convey blessings to another. You will remember the distinction which Bishop Butler draws upon this subject of mediation: on the one side he places the general notion of mediation—that is to say, the truth that the ordinary blessings of life, such as birth, health, nourishment, education, are all mediated to us through the agencies of others. On the other side there is the special notion of mediation, which is akin to our Lord's redemptive work; it is the further truth that, when a man's nature has been injured, when his body or his soul has suffered, then that injury can be to a certain extent repaired, that suffering set right, by the mediation of others, by the action of the physician or the friend. There are clear proofs of "what may be called mercy or compassion in the original constitution of this world": there is "room for an interposition to avert the fatal consequences of vice." Both of these methods of mediation are of common occurrence in daily life; both of them correspond to our Lord's work: the first mainly to His work as the Word of God in creation, the second to His work in His Incarnate Life. And because of this analogy, Butler explains the words "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son," with the bold comment, "gave His Son in the same way of goodness to the world as He affords particular persons the friendly assistance of their fellow-creatures."*

* "Analogy," II. cap. 5.

And as it was with our Lord, so is it with the Church which He founded to represent Him when He should be gone. Its whole existence is one living act of Intercession. It stands, like Phinehas, between the living and the dead. Again and again in Church history the Christian bishop or monk actively intercedes for some city which the passionate wrath of an emperor has condemned to destruction. The city of Antioch, which had in some tumult thrown down the image of the Emperor, is saved by the hermit who meets the imperial commissioners and sends them back to remind the Emperor that men are made in the image of God, and are not to be destroyed for the sake of mere sculptured images. Telemachus throws himself between the combatants in the gladiatorial games, and though he perishes himself, yet the games are stopped for the future. More widely still —the inroad of the Northern barbarians threatens to overwhelm all that was civilised in Europe, and the Church comes in between: it holds up the standard of a noble worship, of a saintly life, of an absolute truth, and awes and tames the barbarians till they too develop a richer civilisation under its guidance. It is the channel through which God's spiritual means of grace pass to humanity: it is the instrument by which the sorrowing heart and the overburdened is saved from despair: it is the living champion for the truth which shields it against the foes of prejudice, of hatred, of forgetfulness which would destroy it. Many a religious man has felt the truth of the Psalmist's words: "Yea, and I had almost said even as they; but lo, then I should have condemned the genera-

tion of Thy children." The witness of the lives of the saints has come in between him and unbelief, and saved him. Always and everywhere the Church is an *Intercessor*; it is the expression of the mind of *the* Paraclete, standing by its very existence between God and the world; standing between the world and the forces of evil which threaten it. Intercessory prayer is but the expression of its intercessory life. Through the power of the Holy Spirit that inter-dependence of man on man which is seen in the actions of daily life finds a new sphere of operations in our prayers. Not merely the actions, not merely the character and influence, but also the praying of a righteous man becomes a great force.

(1) It is a great force, first, because it forces us to keep up a true *ideal* of what those for whom we may pray may be. It makes us, in G. Macdonald's striking phrase, "think of them and God together." If I pray for any one, that implies that I have faith in him, that I believe he may be better than he is If I pray thoughtfully for any particular blessings for him, then I have considered what are the right blessings to ask for him: I must know what God means him to be; my imagination must picture to itself what his true self is, what it can develop into. Which of us does not know what a power for good this is? To know that some one does believe in us; that some one, knowing all our weakness, yet does believe that we can conquer our temptations; to be with some one who expects us to be better; who has so high an ideal for us that he will not humour us, will not indulge our passing fancies, will not, if we lower

ourselves by our action, *either* forsake us *or* pretend that we have not lowered ourselves ; *this*—even if it come from those who have never knelt in prayer for us—this is effectual intercession. "Fidelem is putaveris, facies" is the wise utterance of the Stoic moralist. This, too, is the secret of the power of our Lord Himself ; He not only prayed to the Father, but he treated each person as the Father's child.

Further, we know assuredly how important it is to have our conceptions of what the ideal of others should be, constantly raised. There is always a tendency to drag it down ; every society has its own standard, and judges simply by that ; in one society it is money that supplies the test ; in another clever intellectual sharpness and brilliant power of epigram ; in another birth. Each of these may be good in itself, but each is confessedly partial and inadequate ; not the standard of our Lord. And again, our own sins and weaknesses tend to make us expect less from others, to regard them as equally sinful if only we knew it. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" was one judgment upon our Lord, which at least needed supplementing ; "We know that this man is a sinner," was another judgment passed upon Him, and that was absolutely false.

That is the first necessary part of intercession ; it forces us to keep up the true ideal of life : and this is true not only of prayer for individuals, but of those for bodies of people. We pray for our College, our University, our Church ; at once we are forced to have an ideal for each : our imagination is stirred ; we picture a more glorious future ; a more worthy history for each.

Only here we need one caution: such intercession, if it is to be effective, must be rooted in reality, in actual facts; otherwise it may be as foolish as the intercession of Zebedee's mother for her children.

If we want to pray effectually for our College or our University, we must know their history, we must know for what purposes they were founded, we must know the dangers which have thwarted these purposes, the means by which they have been promoted; we must know how they stand at present in these respects; we must know at what point a forward movement may be made. So it is with individuals; we need to know their virtues and their failings, if prayer is to grow in effectiveness.

But will not this only tend to make us more critical of our neighbours? Yes, it will do so, unless there go with it that which must always be the accompaniment of prayer, nay, which ought always to precede it—thanksgiving. Gratitude has been called the salt of life; it is no less the salt of prayer. Prayer for self, without gratitude for God's mercies, may make us selfish; prayer for others, without gratitude for God's mercies to us in them, may make us critical. There must not be patronising in prayer any more than in deeds of charity. It is not that we are better than they for whom we pray; for else how could we pray for those for whom we care most? It is that we are grateful to God for the good in them—yes, grateful for the capacity for good even in the most degraded, even if we have to decipher the handwriting of God's fingers in the blurred palimpsest of a drunkard's face; it is that we are grateful to God

that such as we are allowed in any way whatever to help them forward. In each for whom we pray we have to remember that great saying which Tertullian attributes to our Lord—"Vidisti fratrem, vidisti dominum tuum" ("Thou hast seen thy brother, thou hast seen thy Lord"), and we may not patronise Him. Starting, then, with a heartfelt utterance of thankfulness to God for the mercies given us through him for whom we pray, our first task will be to picture the ideal which he may reach, and the steps by which he may pass from his present actual state to that ideal.

(2) Intercession is again a great force, because it pledges us to do the best we can for those for whom we pray. We cannot, for very shame, ask God to help those whom we are refusing to help ourselves when that help lies within our power; the very fact of intercession reminds us of the truth of the dependence of man upon man; we ask God to bless those for whom we care, and again and again He reminds us that His blessings are given through *men*, and the answer to our prayer is that we are sent on an errand of mercy. Even more than this, the prayer returns into our own bosom; we cannot pray for any one or for any body for which we care, without being driven back to look at our own lives. Do we pray for our parents? at once we feel that one of the greatest blessings which can happen to them is that *we* should be true sons to them. "A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice, and he that begetteth a wise son shall have

joy of him." Do we pray for our College? at once we feel that the College will be helped onward by the example of our own lives, by the courage with which we are able to make a protest against any evil which may show its head there, or take a vigorous lead in that which is for good. Do we pray for our pupils? at once we feel that one of the greatest blessings for them would be to have over them those who are real students and real Christians themselves, who could lift them into an enthusiasm for learning, a passion for holiness. Do you pray for your tutors? you will soon feel what a strength and stimulus and blessing to them is your own eagerness for knowledge, your own loyalty to be a true and noble conception of University life.

This, then, is the second part of a true intercession: we stop to ask ourselves, Have I done all I can to make that prayer a reality? This is the second reason why true intercession is such a great force in the world. It lifts human nature to the highest level of unselfish action and keeps it there. The type of genuine intercession is Jeanie Deans toiling from Edinburgh to London to win her sister's pardon; it is Esther ready to perish for her father's house and her whole nation, and then robing herself in her royal apparel that she may find favour with the king. These are the types, and the *reality* is seen on the Cross.

These two factors in intercession are in truth only natural; we have not yet reached the level of the supernatural. These parts at least are free from all questions about prayer and the reign of law; they

are open to any one who has a thoughtful and unselfish heart. When we come to our third point it is different.

(3) Intercession is also such a great force, because it brings into action the power of God; just as the tribune's veto would have had no force, if it were only spoken by him on his own responsibility. It was strong because armed with the strength of law; it was strong not with the strength of even a Tiberius Gracchus, but with the power of a sacrosanct authority: so our prayers are strong because they have the promise and the power of Christ behind them. Intercession makes God, God's purposes, God's plans, the centre of our thought. This is of the very essence of all prayer; this it is which lifts it above a mere calculated selfishness into an act of faith. "The central thought and interest of the praying soul is no longer to be self, but God." "I shall strive to win for myself" (these are the words of one who has spoken nobly of prayer)—"I shall strive to win for myself a centre other than myself. It will not satisfy me that my range of topics is sometimes wide and bold, so long as this merely increases, as it were, the size of my circle and leaves the centre unchanged. . . . To pray aright after God's will I must try to take my right place in the universe of God's Truth. The Presence of God is the Presence of all Truth; and prayer is a rehearsing of life in the Presence of God. In my prayer, then, I enter into relation with all truth. . . . When I speak with a man, it is mind that touches mind; when I pray to God, my prayer is my approach to the mind of God. That I should

enter into the mind of God completely would be the perfectness of prayer. That I should try to enter into it is necessary with a view to success in prayer." * These words were spoken about prayer for self. They are no less true of prayer for others. Even there, those we love are not to be the exact centre of our thoughts : our ultimate object is not to help them. It is rather to help forward God's purposes for them : to view them in the light of His love, to draw out the resources of that love upon them.

This fact at once guides the choice of our prayers for them : health, earthly blessing, prosperity, these we shall ask for them, but they will not be our first petitions. These must be for spiritual blessings ; for the power to use aright health, prosperity, earthly blessings ; for the power to use aright adversity and want of success ; for the great cardinal virtues, for the fruit of the Spirit, for the virtues which won the blessings of the Sermon on the Mount : in a word, for willingness on their part to let God's purposes be done through them. In the light of this we shall recognise that there are limitations to our prayers. Even Abraham with his earnest pleading for Sodom felt that he might not go beyond the plea—"Peradventure there shall be ten found there." Even the Apostle of Love recognises that there is a sin unto death and cannot bid us make request for that. So we would not ask for anything that goes beyond the fixed laws of God's justice or order. It is not that we think of God as unable to change even these laws ;

* R. C. Moberley, *On the Enrichment of Prayer*, Derby Church Congress Report, p. 520.

it is rather that we know that all His laws are the free expression of His love for man; where knowledge seems to show that they are fixed, we aquiesce and praise Him: where they still lie beyond our knowledge, we pray that they may be moulded to the highest result.

All the stirrings of the human will, all the aspirations for higher things, all of those strange indefinable ways in which our spirit is moved by the influences around us,—on these prayer can play; along these lines it can draw forth blessings from God. And it is this thought which gives us trust and perseverance in prayer. It was this faith that God was there which made Elijah go on praying, though his servant again and again brought back the answer: "There is nothing." It is this which supplements what is lacking in the other two parts of intercession. With all our attempts for others, all our thoughtfulness for them, we may yet be blind to their real interests, we may utterly fail to carry out that on which our hearts are set. Then it is our comfort to feel that intercession is a placing of them in wiser hands than our own; that He to whom we entrust them has the forces of ages in which to work out His purposes, and it becomes possible for us to lay aside our anxieties, to be anxious in nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let our requests be made known unto God.

Such are some of the ways in which intercession becomes a force in the world; preserving a true ideal of human nature, raising it to the highest level of

unselfish action, bringing into action the working of God Himself. I am inclined to suggest that it would be a help in the method of our intercession to begin at any rate sometimes with the wider circles and gradually to narrow down to our own immediate circle. "I exhort therefore, first of all," says St. Paul, "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men" (1 Tim. ii. 1). We shall be more forced to dwell on the purposes of God if we pray first for all mankind, and then work down through the Church, to our country, our university, our college, our home. The prayer will grow thus in fulness and intensity as we approach the sacred circle, which is the special sphere of our own responsibility, where we start with deeper gratitude, with the keener insight of love for the perfection of those for whom we pray; "when our intercession is made an exercise of love and care for those amongst whom our lot is fallen, or who belong to us in a nearer relation, it then becomes the greatest benefit to ourselves and produces its best effects upon our own hearts."

These are the words of William Law in the chapter on Intercession in his "Serious Call." There are few statements about intercession more beautiful, more stimulating than that. Hear a few more words of his and I have done.

"There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him; and when you can do this sincerely for any man, you have fitted your soul for the performance of everything that is kind and civil towards him. This will fill your heart with a gene

rosity and tenderness that will give you a better and sweeter behaviour than anything that is called fine breeding and good manners. Be daily on your knees in a solemn deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others in such form, with such length, importunity and earnestness as you use for yourself; and you will find all little, ill-natured passions die away, your heart grow great and generous, delighting in the common happiness of others as you used only to delight in your own."

# THE LIGHT OF GOD.

By the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A.*

"It is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."—2 Cor. iv. 6 (R.V.).

ST. PAUL evidently refers in this glorious sentence to the sublime passage, almost unparalleled in literature, with which the Bible opens. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Similarly, at the beginning of our existence our hearts are waste and void and dark. It is only after God has said "Let there be light," that light and beauty and happiness make their appearance. By nature our hearts are dark. By nature we are all agnostics. We do not know God. To us He is a mere name, and generally a name of terror. The rites of all earth-born, and therefore false, religions sufficiently prove that. It is quite evident that the natural idea

* Preached in St. James's Hall on Sunday evening, January 11th, 1891.

of man is to offer some sacrifice by which he can propitiate God whom he regards as a savage despot. The prospect of death excites in man only nameless horror. Men, through fear of death, are all their lifetime in depressing bondage. We sometimes make-believe that we are happy ; but it is an exceedingly transparent make-believe. In our own day, for various reasons into which I need not enter now, some men are not specially conscious of the terror to which I have referred. But their life is very little better than a blank. There is an unfulfilled and aching void in their hearts. As St. Augustine discovered long centuries ago, man is created for God, and is never able to rest without God. Without God men are, as St. Paul said, without hope, and they not unnaturally regard life as the supreme calamity. If you, catching something of the spirit of the time, are not troubled and anxious, you are nevertheless oppressed by some unrealised aspirations, some unsatisfied desires. You are really athirst for the living God. But you are trying, and vainly trying, to quench your thirst at human fountains. The profoundest theological proverb of my native language, the Welsh, is still profoundly true : "Without God, without anything. God, and enough." Such is the brief, literal translation of a deep saying, which declares that God Himself is the greatest and only absolute necessity of every man. If you, be you who you may, turn to your hard and weary heart, and put to it the straight, plain question, "What do you want?" and are willing to hear the answer, your heart will say, "I want God." But how shall we find Him? The

speaker in the Book of Job, thousands of years ago, exclaimed, "Canst thou, by searching, find out God?" Such knowledge is high as heaven, deeper than the grave, longer than the earth, broader than the sea. What canst thou do? What canst thou know? A great religious poet of our own day and country, in touch with the latest discoveries of human science, has echoed that saying:

> "I found Him not in world or sun,
> Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
> Nor through the questions men may try,
> The petty cobwebs we have spun."

And this earth, when it was, as I have read to you, waste and void and dead, did it discover the sun? No! All that the earth could do was to do what it has done in this part of England to-day—generate fogs and clouds, which hide the sun even when it is shining in its strength at noon-day. Man is as incapable of discovering God as the earth was of discovering the sun. The utmost that man can do is to confess his deep need of God, to admit that he has an aching void in his heart that he cannot fill, and then, like the Athenians of old, to erect an altar to the "unknown God." But when God says, "Let there be light," then, as at the creation, there is light. In the glorious language of my text, God "shines in our hearts," and the God-illuminated man can no more doubt the existence of God there than he can doubt his own existence. There are, as Cardinal Newman said, supreme moments when we are specially and exclusively conscious of only two existences—God and self. Indeed, it is only whimsical philosophers

who doubt the existence of one or the other; and it is a very remarkable thing that any man who doubts the existence of God doubts his own existence at the same time. If God is an illusion, so are you. Every real philosopher who doubts the existence of God necessarily and wisely doubts his own existence. As a matter of fact, you have precisely the same ultimate evidence of the existence of God and of your own self. If you reject one, you must reject the other.

On the other hand, nothing is more significant than the ease with which the unsophisticated mind accepts the existence both of self and of God. Nothing impresses me more than the wonderful fact that little children never find the least difficulty in believing in God. I should have anticipated that this would be most difficult. But, with Divine insight, children, when they become conscious of their own existence, become conscious of the existence of God also, and it does not occur to them that there is any difficulty in either case. Difficulty arises only when, in after life, the child becomes capricious and tricky. I read to you the first verse in the Bible a few minutes ago, and there you remember the Bible assumes the existence of God—it never attempts to prove it. No wise person ever would attempt to prove the existence of God. God "shines in our heart,"—that is the only explanation. And to suppose that this evidence is less trustworthy than the knowledge which we receive through our fallible senses is about as unscientific and unphilosophical as anything can well be. Our senses are continually misleading us. Our consciousness

never does. As a matter of fact, the knowledge or experience received through the physical senses involves quite as many postulates and assumptions as the knowledge of God, which comes direct to the heart. Nothing could be more utterly absurd than the attempt to distinguish between knowledge, which is apparently material in its origin, and that which is directly spiritual. For even in accepting physical knowledge we have to make great metaphysical assumptions. Therefore the evidence which I have in the depth of my soul of the presence and activity of God is more scientific than the evidence which I have that there is a congregation in St. James's Hall at this moment. My eyes may deceive me, my ears may deceive me ; but my conscience and real experience cannot deceive me.

All human history, from the Divine standpoint, is a record of the revelation of God to man. The dazzling light of the Eternal has been tempered to the tender eye of man. God has never left "Himself without witness," as St. Paul says, "in that He did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts xiv. 17, R.V.). The same Apostle says that "the invisible things of 'God' are seen through the things which are made." The universe, man, history, all things, are used by God as channels through which He makes Himself known to us. But the light has often been very dim, although, as St. John reminded us, it has never been quite "overcome" by the darkness. Now, the great object of this many-sided revelation from heaven is, as the text says, to

make known to us the "glory of God." If a friend visits you, you like to show him your most valued possessions. If you are a gardener, you will take him to see the loveliest flowers in your conservatory. If you are an artist, you will take him to your studio and show him your best picture. If you are an author, you will place in his hands your favourite work. Now, God wishes men to know what He glories in above everything else; what He deems His best possession; what gives Him more joy than anything else; He wishes to gives us "the knowledge of His glory." What does He glory in? What does He wish us to know above everything else? Does He wish us to know His power? Certainly not. That might impress some. He placed our first parents in the Garden of Eden. Great loveliness was there, but no special manifestation of power. I observe that when foreign potentates visit princes they visit the arsenal, or the army, or the fleet, and thus form a great idea of their power. That is one of many particulars in which the King of kings is strikingly different from other kings. He put our first parents in the Garden of Eden, where there was no great display of power. He might have planted them on some solitary island where great tides leaped and roared. But He has never gone out of His way to impress men with His power. Neither has God ever sought to impress men with His wisdom, although that is unsearchable. It is only very lately that God has begun to unfold to man in a large degree the marvels of His wisdom. The exact sciences are exceedingly modern. It is only in our

lifetime that God has permitted us, with such modern marvels as the microscope, the telescope, and the spectroscope, to find out the wonders of His wisdom. He was in no hurry to impress us with that. Nothing could be more absurd than the idolatrous worship of mere cleverness. We may be as clever and orthodox as the devil himself, and yet as wicked. God does not glory in His power or wisdom.

Let me tell you what God does glory in ; what He has been trying to reveal to us from the very beginning ; what He wishes us to know more than anything else. He wishes us to know that His very nature is love. He wishes to persuade us that He attaches a higher value to Love than to Power or to Wisdom ; and where shall I find words to describe the rapture of mortal man when he discovers God is love? I wish I had brought with me one of the most glorious literary fragments I ever read. It is in the life of Henry Ward Beecher. He was brought up in a narrow, antiquated Calvinistic school ; for a long time he groped in darkness and misery, and the name of God was to him a name of terror. But he tells us, with glowing and overwhelming eloquence, how one memorable day it dawned upon him that God was love. In a moment the whole universe became radiant with new beauty. Everything was changed. He was changed. He passed from hell to heaven, and the light of that radiant moment never passed away. May God grant that every one of us may experience that now ! Let us forget everything, that we may rejoice in the love of God with exceeding great joy.

Now, perhaps, we understand why and how the crowning and final self-revelation of God was in the face of Jesus Christ, "who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." All previous revelations were summed up and completed in the face of Jesus Christ. And while Peter keeps his eyes on the face of Christ he can never sink in the Sea of Galilee. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." There is life in that face. Whatever conception you have formed of God must be supplemented by that revelation of tenderness and pity which has now come to all men in the face of Jesus Christ. It was a happy hour for England and for the world when a young man in the eastern counties, called Charles Haddon Spurgeon, first saw the face of Jesus Christ. He has told us the story of that ecstatic moment. He had wandered from one sanctuary to another, and had found no conviction anywhere. But as he went into a Primitive Methodist chapel the preacher was giving out the text, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth." And young Spurgeon, who was walking down the aisle, "looked," as he says, "and was saved." At once his sins were forgiven, and the experience of that glad hour has been reproduced in the happy lives of hundreds of thousands of men and women in all parts of the world. Oh, that at this moment some young man may look into the face of Christ as Spurgeon looked, and become, like him, a mighty preacher of the everlasting gospel! All fears and sorrows are borne down by a glance, when we lift our eyes and discover Jesus of Nazareth.

I, too, saw him when I was a little boy. That is why I am here to-night.

But how is it that some of you do not enjoy this vision, do not experience that Eternal Life which consists in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent? St. Paul, in the context, gives an appalling explanation of the ignorance of some. He says the god of this world hath blinded them Why? Because they are selfish. The devil whispers in their ears, "Look after number one. Please yourself. Never mind what your mother or the parson may say." And the young fool, listening to one who has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning, is led captive by the devil into the darkness of sin. The selfish man loves darkness rather than light because his deeds are evil. So long have some been in the darkness that they have begun to lose the power of vision. You read in Professor Drummond's "Natural Law" of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, where the light of the sun never enters. In that cave are fish which possess organs of sight. But they have long ceased to see. Their sight is gone through want of use. And no power that you possess will live unless you employ it. If, in obedience to the devil, you continue to turn away from Christ, you will gradually lose the power of seeing Him. But, thank God, it has not gone so desperately far as that with most of us. We have not lost the power of spiritual vision. What shall we do? Do? Do you wish the sun to stream into your face? Then look at the sun. What does St. Paul say? "It is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our

hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Then look at the face of Jesus Christ. The light will come streaming into your own face, and fill you with life and gladness. Look to Jesus! "There is life for a look at the Crucified One!" Listen to His words: "I am the Light of the world." Although it seems blasphemous for a Syrian peasant to say that, all men in some degree believe it to-day. In this island there are thousands of witnesses to the truth of my text and my teaching. He has saved us. This is the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The stewards tell me there are more strange faces here to-night than on any other occasion. The weather has kept many of our own people away, and thus given visitors an opportunity of getting in. God grant that you may now behold the blue heaven of the mercy of God, and see the Sun of Righteousness which has arisen with healing in His wings! This is a season of the year when more young men come to London than at any other time. That, also, may partly explain the presence of so many unknown faces here to-night. There are scores, if not hundreds, of young men here from the country. Why should I wait till next Sunday week to speak specially to young men? The devil may have played havoc with you before then. Mr. Sarjeant said the other night that he had visited the classes, and had personal conversation with nearly every member of the Mission, and he had made the appalling discovery that at least 25 per cent. of the thousand members of this Mission were backsliders. And the majority of

these said that their backsliding began by neglecting private prayer and communion with God. And so the light within them became darkness. When the light within you is darkness how great is that darkness! It can be felt. Young men and young women, be warned by the terrible fate of these. You may not be reclaimed, as they have been. Be warned in time. Let all be warned. You may now come back to God your Father if you have wandered away. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so is He lifted up, that you may have everlasting life. Every person who was bitten and looked at the brazen serpent was healed. And every man who looks now at Jesus of Nazareth, crucified for you on the cross, may be saved to-night. God grant that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God may shine in your hearts and in mine, now and for evermore

# A BISHOP'S WORK.

By the Ven. F. W. Farrar, D.D., F.R.S.*

"Suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.' —2 Tim. iv. 5 (R.V.).

WE are gathered here this morning at the consecration of two bishops of the English Church. One of them is to labour in an English diocese, the other to go forth to a distant island that has been called "the beautiful Malta of the Indian Ocean." Discovered by the Portuguese in 1545, named "Mauritius" by the Dutch in 1598, it received in 1765 from the French the name of "L'Ile de France," but in 1814 was ceded by the Treaty of Paris to the full and unconditional sovereignty of Great Britain. The vast diocese of the new Bishop will include not only the island of Mauritius, half way between India and the Cape, but also the islands of the Seychelles Archipelago, a thousand miles to the north of it, the Maldive Islands, one thousand miles to the north-east, and more than seventy other little islands scattered over the vast extent of the Indian

* Preached in Westminster Abbey on February 2nd, 1891, at the Consecration of Dr. Perowne as Bishop of Worcester, and Prebendary William Walsh as Bishop of Mauritius.

Ocean, and all of them in that tropical part of the world. When this Abbey was built, more than eight centuries ago, by the saintly Confessor, when it was rebuilt, more than six centuries ago, by the pious Plantagenet as the chief shrine of a nation still ignorant of the overwhelming increase, of the colossal destiny which lay before it, although certainly they dreamed not of a perishable home who thus could build, how little could they have anticipated that so many centuries after they had crumbled into dust, from this chapel of their Benedictine monastery, and from the small and turbulent people over whom they ruled, should be sent forth, year after year, bishops of dioceses in the then unknown Antipodes, bishops of the Church of an empire on which the sun never sets —bishops who speak a tongue which will soon be that of one-third of the human race—bishops who from the storm-swept Falkland Isles, and the bleak coast of Hudson's Bay, and from China towards those coral groups, which, like rich and various gems, inlay the bosom of the Pacific, should take their lives in their hands, and, alike in the dripping forests of Central Africa, by the league-long Australian breakers, amid the cane-brakes of New Zealand and rice swamps of China, amid exiles, amid heat and snow, the sun smiting them by day and the moon by night, true servants of servants, preach to the perishing the gospel of the grace of God! Nothing is a subject of deeper encouragement to missionary enterprise than the growth of the colonial episcopate. In 1787 was consecrated the first colonial bishop, Dr. Inglis of Nova Scotia. Now there are nearly one hundred

colonial dioceses. In 1800 there were seven missionary societies, now there are more than seventy. Then there were not eighty mission schools, now there are more than 12,000. Then there were not 50,000 heathen converts, now there are nearly two millions speaking forty languages. As we read of it we think of the promises to the ancient Church of Israel now more splendidly fulfilled—"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee." The ancient Greek version speaks as though in unconscious prophecy: "The Lord God will give His word to them who preach the glad tidings with mighty power." By their labours, by their self-denial, by their humility, by their courage in holding the outposts and tilling the waste places, our truest and most faithful colonial bishops have added to our strength and shed new lustre upon the mother Church at home. Nay, more: even in this worldly, eager age of science and mammon-worship, when the faith of so many has waxed cold, these our bishops in distant colonies, and *in partibus infidelium*, have shown that the old gospel is still potent to inspire the self-sacrifice which won its earliest victories. Like St. Paul and the earliest missionaries of our faith, of whom they are true successors, they have been in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils among the heathen, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea; in weariness, in painfulness, in

fastings often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, besides their care of all the churches. Yes, they have freely added even to the glorious army of martyrs. If, in the words of Tertullian, "Semen est sanguis Christianorum," shall we not rejoice over the heroic deaths for Christ's sake of Charles Mackenzie in the malarious fever swamps of the river Shiré; and of James Hannington among the savages of Central Africa; and of Coleridge Patteson, whose corpse the very savages who killed him sent floating, with a palm branch on its breast, over the blue waters upon the coral isles? Men who have thus lived, thus died, are the brightest glory of the Episcopate; and to him who will so soon be sent forth from the faithful labours in the home field to follow another beloved and faithful labourer to his distant scene of toil, all present will wish and pray for the blessing of that work which is its own exceeding great reward; that though, as with the wings of the morning, he fly to the uttermost part of the earth, even there God's hand shall lead him, and His right hand shall guide him.

But another of our brethren is being consecrated to-day to a home diocese; and the prelacy of England may seem a prouder and statelier matter than the distant and humble throne of a colonial bishop. The pagan historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, draws a painful contrast between the humble simplicity of the poor primitive *episcopi*, and the worldly pomp, the unseemly arrogance, and profuse luxury of the great dioceses of the fourth century. The day may have been—let us say more truly the day was—when

such a contrast would have been applicable also to our own Church of England. The day was, far back in the last century, when for six months of the year bishops did little or nothing in their own dioceses; when leaders of the Church held but one confirmation and preached but one sermon in the year; when they left princely fortunes to their children and dependents out of the revenues of the Church; when they lived in splendour and worldly luxury, keeping their clergy at an immeasurable distance, and hindering rather than helping all deep devotion and burning enthusiasm for the work of the Church of God. The day was, a little farther back, when many bishops were deeply tainted with the lowest spirit of worldliness; when one of the most leading bishops of his day writes that he saw the majority of his brethren bartering their dignity for worldly aims, and polluting the gospel humility by the pride of prelacy. A Church in which such a state of things had been suffered to prevail deserved, as she received, a sharp lesson. Thank God! the day when Episcopal arrogance and Episcopal ostentation were common things is over—let us hope for ever. It is true that amongst those who are idle and self-seeking the Church of England has never lacked a line of those true bishops who have borne in mind that pre-eminence of position means also pre-eminence of responsibility; that splendour of reward means also urgency of labour; that they are placed above their brethren, not to lord it over God's heritage as haughty superiors, but in unfeigned lowliness to be examples to the flock, that not in hypocritical semblance, but in utter reality

their motto should be, "I am among you as one that serveth." Deep humility, absolute self-sacrifice—those should be the keynotes of every true Episcopate; they will carry with them the simplicity of heart which is detached from worldly things, the initiative which can dare to break up the deep slumber of inveterate prejudices, the undaunted courage and moral faithfulness which will flinch as little before journalists and leading articles as before kings and mobs. Such were the great bishops of the Church of old. Such was St. Chrysostom, living in ascetic self-denial, hotly hated, savagely maligned because he denounced with unflinching plainness the vices of the noble and the rich, and content in the cause of that faithfulness to lose his home, his bishopric, his health, and his peace of life. Such was St. Augustine, maintaining the severe poverty of his clergy house, saying to his people, "Do not give me rich robes; they do not become a humble bishop. When a rich robe is given me I sell it, and give it to the poor." Such was St. Ambrose, not even fearing the mighty Theodosius when his hands were wet with the massacre of Thessalonica. Such was St. Basil. When the furious Prefect threatened him with confiscation and with death—"Is that all?" he said. "What fear of confiscation has one who possesses but a few books and these threadbare robes? Death will send me but the sooner to Him whom I love." Such was Carlo Borromeo. When passing to his cathedral in scarlet vestment and jewelled pectoral, he showed by the little stream of blood which trickled from under his robes that he had been treading with

bare feet that flinty road. Thank God men who have similarly crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts have never been wanting in the Church of England. "Brother," said great Bishop Grosseteste, "if your plough is broken I will have it mended; but a ploughman I found you and a ploughman I mean to leave you." Think of Archbishop Warham dying with only £30 in his treasury, and saying with a smile, "Satis viaticum ad cœlum"; of Archbishop Parker engraving on his seal, and painting on his palace walls his chosen motto, "Mundus transit et concupiscentia ejus." Even the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, amid so much of torpor and vulgar worldliness, could boast of such men, not a few, as Bishop Biddle, so humble, so large-hearted, so devout; as Archbishop Leighton, with his Christlike abhorrence of narrow intolerance and party faction; as Bishop Berkeley, so generous, so earnest, so self-sacrificing, to whom even the bitter satirist could attribute every virtue under heaven; as Bishop Wilson, appearing with his leather shoe-ties at the drawing-room of Queen Caroline, and refusing every temptation to leave his small and poverty-stricken diocese; as another Bishop the breastplate of whose coffin I saw as a boy in the palace of his successor, with its quaint inscription—"Siste viator, vide, et ride palatium episcopi." Such bishops, holy and humble men of heart, have been the strength, the glory, the inspiration of a Church more than ten thousand times the men who had not their humility. And we need men who, when tempted by their position to look down on their fellow presbyters, should with shame remem-

ber Him who washed His disciples' feet, and the warning of His chief apostle, "Tie lowliness of mind around you as with a knotted girdle." We need men, strong and manly, who have in them more of the prophet than of the priest; men who, with the love of God burning like a fire upon the altar of their hearts, fear man little because they fear God much. We need bishops who will care for the essential, not for the infinitesimal; bishops whom the rich and the ruling, when they do wrong, shall dread, to whom the sorrowful shall look for sympathy, and the innocent for protection. We need bishops who will not swim with the stream, but will have the fortitude to breast its fiercest waves; bishops who, turning a disdainful ear to murmurs and applauding cliques, will prefer, when need be, the mountain air of public obloquy, and the blessing at which in these days so many scoff, and in which so very few believe, which Christ pronounced on those who for His sake all men persecute and hate. We need bishops who will hold the gilded outside and the title, far too often and too fulsomely repeated, and the palace, and the wealth, and the surrounding obsequiousness as nothing better than dust in the midnight, and whom, siding with the weak against the strong, rebuking the baseness of fashion, confronting the insolence of guilt, God shall haply honour as He honoured Martin Luther, by making all bad men their enemies.

And such a man, we trust, will he be whom God calls to-day to the high office of an English bishop. I will not speak of his long life of service, of the kindness of heart which has made him beloved by so

many, of his restoration to something of its pristine magnificence of his half-ruined cathedral. And in two great spheres of influence he has shown his worthiness for this high position. He has shown the rare combination of inflexible faithfulness to his own views and generous charity towards the counter views of others. He has shown that he loves peace above rubrics, and has a heart sufficiently uncorroded by the virulence of strife to understand practically, as well as nominally, the magnificent comprehensiveness of the Church of England. And in another noble and most necessary sphere of labour he has helped to give the death-blow to false accretions of traditional opinion by his learned book on the Psalms of David and by his edition of the Cambridge Bible for schools, perhaps the best of those modern commentaries which, in the light of increasing knowledge, have corrected for multitudes of younger students the age-long errors of Biblical interpretation. The way to kill error is to supply truth in its place; and it is no small part of the duty of the present generation of Churchmen, with competent learning and with minds washed clear of baseness and prejudice, to save the generation yet to come from those overwhelming difficulties of belief which will be increasingly fatal to the faith of thousands unless we have the courage to tell them plainly, without euphuism and without circumlocution, without the use of popular phrases in a different sense from that in which they are generally understood, and without every time we lay down a general proposition carefully guarding ourselves from being supposed to exclude the contradictory—what the Bible

is and also what the Bible is not—what we do and what we do not believe respecting its inspiration. Intellectually, there is no task more urgent than co-ordination of religious opinion with these certain results of science and criticism, which are in themselves a Divine revelation, and in which the light of God shines on steadily and impartially, showing all things in the plain history of their routine. There are certain essential and eternal truths of Christianity enshrined in our ancient creeds of which we are as convinced as of life itself. But there is also a vast borderland of religious belief in which the opinions of men have changed from time to time, seeing that man's ignorance is immeasurable, and that from time to time fragments of it are being constantly dissipated by the steady light of dawn. "Truth," said Milton, "is compared in Scripture to a streaming fountain."

> "If our waters flow not in a perpetual progression
> They sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition."

"I believe," said John Robinson, when he addressed the Pilgrim Fathers before they sailed in the *Mayflower* to found the best strength of the Western world, "I am convinced that the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His holy Word." How can it be otherwise if we grasp the promise of Christ's perpetual presence, and know the full meaning of that half-obliterated article of the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost"? To the bishops, then, of our Church and to our fathers in God we look to cultivate the spirit of humility, the spirit of self-

sacrifice, the spirit of charity, the spirit of progress, to which the truth is dearer than tradition.

But suffer me yet to touch on two works in which the bishops of our churches at home especially must guide and inspire this generation to take in hand with more and more strenuousness, with more and more enthusiasm, if the Church is to rise to the height of her immense responsibilities: they are the work of social amelioration and the work of the evangelisation of the masses. The Church is bound by every consideration, human and Divine, to take in hand the great work of social amelioration. "Persons ecclesiastical," says Richard Hooker, a name once at least venerated in the Church of England, "are God's stewards, not only for that He doth set them over His family as the ministers of ghostly food, but even for this very cause, that they are to receive and dispose His temporal revenues, the gifts and oblations which men bring them." "The Church of England," says Judge Blackstone, "from the first conversion of pagan Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, was not only accustomed, but bound to provide for the maintenance of the poor." The great social evils of this century have yet to be grappled with, and by us, more thoroughly, more systematically, more heroically than has ever yet been done. None but the blind, the callous, the selfish, the interested, can deny the bitterness and the extent of remediable human misery—I say remediable, not, perhaps, extinguishable. I will not enter into statistics, at which the cynical delight to cavil, and so to excuse themselves from their duties, when I assert that great problems are at our very

doors, which, as a nation and as a Church, we must solve, or we must perish. Wander through the streets of our cities at the dead of night; see with your own eyes the filthy slums, the rookeries of vice girdled by gin-shops as with a ring of fire,—pale, diseased faces, the weary, wicked, drink-sodden, vice-scared faces in the gaslight. Faces! Oh, my God! we call them faces!—men's and women's, ay, and children's faces; we call them faces, festering to despair, or worse, petrifying to vice, not a finger-touch of God left whole on them.

Look at the depraved, the ragged children, reared in the streets, which are the festering seed-plots of the felon and of the harlot! Listen to the obscene language! Have you yourselves never heard it in the poorest quarters of our cities—leprous enough to make fire leap from the polluted air—which may be heard upon the lips of children, and of women tearing each other in their rage, as I have seen them fighting in the streets? Estimate, if you can, the areas of human life which are scathed and blasted year by year in your Christian England. Here at the doors of your great palaces—here in the very shadow of your cathedral, as well as among the brutalised and dissipated aboriginal races, we come in contact with that plague-spot of civilisation, that curse of drink, which, as our leading statesman said, works evils more deadly because more continuous than the three great historic scourges of war, famine and pestilence combined. To grapple with the curse alone there needs a far greater upheaval of the forces of the Christian conscience than yet has been in hearts of

which many are now fat as brawn, cold as ice, and hard as the nether millstone. Consider the altogether abnormal and revolutionary growth of great cities, in whose dark places coagulates the scum of our civilisation! Consider the awful contrasts of luxury and destitution! Consider the stupendous growth of population, which in these islands alone adds a thousand a day to the swollen numbers of our nation! Consider how much larger a portion of this increment is in the ranks of the struggling and the unfit. But why need I argue with you when to every soul not steeped in cruel selfishness or absorbed in petty officialism the urgency of our too much neglected duty is so apparent? If you scorn my words, do so if you will; but listen to those of one of our best and most eloquent living prelates, the Bishop of Derry. "The generation," he says, "which is to take our place will certainly judge the Church by her works. I see them rising to their feet, the greatest host that time has ever known; I hear the murmurs of millions speaking to millions across the sea in many languages. What there is in the gospel to rectify the relations of human life, to alleviate the selfishness of capital and chasten the selfishness of labour, to carry to their homes improvement in the present, and hope for the future, will find eager listeners; but to the man of the near future religion will appear a barren and worthless sham unless she be taught to clothe herself with the blossoms of worship, and bear the fruits of human love. Choose, then," he says, "which of the two you will: a Church which can sever the temporal and the accidental from the essential and the eternal

—a Church which can interpret Christ's living words and continue His ministry of love, or a Church reactionary and retrogressive, blundering on in ruinous precedents, and extracting from the present nothing but its bitterness, and from the past nothing but its mistakes." "Once, again, we need more of the missionary energy which at home must carry the gospel to the multitudes." It is not me that says this. We hear but the voice of one of the most learned prelates of this century, the late Bishop of Durham. "The Church needs," he says, "to relearn the lost secret of the compulsion of human souls." Consider the areas of past neglect which have to be reconquered, the total or partial alienation of masses of the working class. It caused one of our bishops to endorse the report that Christianity is not in possession of South London. It caused one of our most laborious and experienced bodies of the East End clergy to testify that, after making every allowance, there is a multitude to whom no voice has spoken, to whom no hand has been held out, and who are growing up neglected and outcast. It caused the Committee of the London Diocesan Conference, two years ago, to deplore that in many of our crowded centres the Church is more like a hulk unable to move than a ship with her sails set, being, as she is, unequipped with material resources, and manned by a depressed and insufficient crew put on board to do a task which is impossible. Consider the growth of socialism and discontent, which throws into unstable equilibrium the whole of the present system of our trade and commerce. Lift your eyes to the smoke which indicates that underneath the

superincumbent snows of the summit, or the vineyard of the mountain slopes of your social system, burn and seethe the forces which may yet shatter it to fragments with volcanic violence; and if you lack the imagination to estimate the meaning of these portents, if you can read the face of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times, then by all means pull down your barns and build greater, until you are startled by the thundercrash of doom—"Thou fool, this night!"

If you want the soft voices of euphemism and of self-congratulation, if you expect on this occasion glowing eulogies upon ourselves and our doings, and our incomparable Liturgy, and our magnificent achievements, there are plenty of voices to murmur to us without end our applause. And when encouragement is necessary as a support to a trembling and humble hopefulness which will inspire us to constancy of effort in confronting problems which might well cause despair, those voices may say much which is true about the religious awakenment which dates from the work of Wesley and Whitfield, and about the greater earnestness and true devotion of thousands and tens of thousands of our parochial clergy. But if such voices are to lull us into the slumber of self-satisfaction, if they are to make us supine and acquiescent in the present intolerable condition, if they are to satisfy us with our admirable but inadequate parochialism, if they are to persuade us that we are doing enough, that we are as a Church fulfilling all that is required of us,—then let us beware lest we, too, have to feel that agony of shame and

astonishment which must have been felt by the angel of the Church of Laodicea when the voice of Him who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks so sternly shattered the luxury of his self-satisfaction with the words, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold that thou mayest be rich; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." I say that socially and religiously the work which has yet to be done is large enough to tax the most inexhaustible energy and to appal the stoutest heart. Socially the condition of the masses has to be ameliorated; religiously they have to be vitally reached. The parochial system alone will not do it; the parochial system for every purpose for which it was designed is admirable, is of transcendent value, is beyond all praise, and must always continue. But the parochial system was mainly pastoral and not aggressive, for edification not for conquest. It needs to be supplemented; it needs to be reinforced. Of what avail is it that far up the great bells peal in delight, tossing their clangours over the heedless town, if the masses will not come to our churches nor listen to our sermons, and if, as the East End clergy testify in one of their memorials, our services offer them something which they do not want and which they cannot understand? Besides our parochial clergy, our Church needs its missionaries for the myriads of our home heathen, who are often more difficult than the heathen themselves to reach, and to rescue from the besotting

intoxication of gin, and of blasphemy and lust. It is not, it cannot be, the work of the whole Church of God. The Church of England, as the present Bishop of Durham has said, can do this mighty work; but he truly adds, "She can only do it by evoking infinitely more self-sacrifice and whole-hearted co-operation of corporate self-denial than is as yet evoked." Some of the rich have been aroused, but as a body the rich have to be aroused far more effectually to the truth that they are the stewards, not the owners, of what God has entrusted to them, and not one of them in a hundred gives half what he ought to give, or recognises the fulness of his responsibility for the right use of his wealth in the service of his fellow-men. Some of the laity are partially awakened, but they want to be a hundred-fold more awakened to the sense that they, no less than we, are a royal priesthood, and that every Christian should be God's missionary. Some of the young have been a little touched, but they want to see in the Church of England some man not living in the easy-going conventional comfort which is, perhaps of necessity, enough for most of us; some man who will pour a silent contempt upon honours and upon gold, and will be able to flash into them a more burning zeal and a more self-crucifying love, and show that the royal path of happiness lies not in self-seeking ambition, but in self-obliterating faith in God. We want brotherhoods, both among the clergy and the laity—men to whom has come as has not come to most of us, because we are not equal to it, and because we are not worthy, mayhap, of it, but

as it came of old to the Hebrew prophets, to John the Baptist, to the Apostles, to the Hermits, to Benedict, to Francis, to Savonarola, to George Fox, to John Wesley, to the early Methodists—the glorious and happy call, more glorious and happy than ours, whose humble and more commonplace work—humble and more commonplace it may be in the eyes of God, even though it be in the high places of the Church—has already been assigned to us—the call to forsake all, and in poverty and in persecution, through good report and evil report, to follow Christ, and, obedient to His hand, to go into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. If that call awakes no echoes in the hearts of those who when we have passed away will be, perhaps, a new and more shining order of the clergy of the Church of England, then be sure that the call will burn in the heart of some lay servant of God, like John Howard, who purified the prisons, or Lloyd Garrison, who emancipated the slaves, like General Gordon or Lord Shaftesbury; and if not in the Church of England, then as assuredly in other communities; yea, He who finds Him ambassadors whom men deny, may raise up His truest servants, if not among the vineyards of Ephraim, then even among the poorest gleanings of Abiezer.

But, oh! let not the sons of our Church make the great refusal. Let us not succumb to the dangers of use, custom, the deterioration of professionalism, the commonplace of routine, the spurious intoxication of party ambitions. Let us fight heart and soul against the lowered tone and the dulness of spirit

which are the insensible but unfettered enemies of progress, against what the late Dean of St. Paul's has called the torpor, insensibility, and deadness to what is high and great, which is more than any other evil the natural foe of all that is characteristic and essential in the Christian ministry—which is a ministry of life and of reality, or it is nothing. The duties of the Christian ministry are just what they were in the days of St. Paul, and they are not only to strengthen goodness, but also to spread and carry on the necessary warfare against wrong and evil. Is the devil dead? Are his agents silent, inactive, impotent? Have the world-rulers of this darkness been disenthroned, and is there no longer any spiritual wickedness in high places? Are there no huge, unmanageable evils which afflict humanity, and which, if they have to be subdued, should be subdued by us? Are there no reverses, no vicissitudes, no swayings to and fro in the warfare which has no discharge? Is there no necessity in many a quarter of the Armageddon battle to turn rout into resistance, and resistance into victory? Is it time for the Church to walk complacently arm-in-arm with the world? Is it time for good and evil to be lying side by side together in amicable compromise instead of wrestling in fierce conflict shoulder to shoulder? Is it time for us to die of respectability and to be too late for everything? Ah! let the Church of England learn from the past, and not again make the fatal mistake which she has made often, and made last and most conspicuous in the days of Wesley, when enthusiasm was frowned down and

no small part of the light and fire of religion was extinguished with it. Those brave creatures, Wesley and Whitefield, alone had the grace and strength to burst the strangling bonds of conventionalism with burning reality—the vast, thick, unshaken mass of human darkness, human barbarism, human selfishness, human degradation. And what, alas! was the attitude of the Church of England towards those heroic, truly Christly, truly apostolic efforts? As Wesley said, "Bishops of the Church of God at that time, angels of the Church, stars in God's right hand, summoning their brethren together to tell them of their responsibility for human souls could find nothing better with which to fill their addresses than to tell them to lift up their voices against the people called Methodists," although among them were found the most pious members of the Church of England. Methodist preachers were accused because they gathered the rabble, as though—O Christ in heaven! O Friend of publicans and sinners! O Thou who hadst compassion on the multitude! O Thou preacher of the kingdom from the boat and the roadside and on the hill!—as though it were for the respectable only, and not for the rabble, that Thou didst die, as though Thou hadst not been sent to call sinners to repentance and the multitudes who strayed on the dark mountains and were not fed! Yes, the Methodists were accused of attracting the rabble to their gatherings. Let us make no mistake so deadly or any analogous to it. We need the flame of that very enthusiasm which was the chief subject of denunciation in the sermons of the eighteenth

century. We need more than all at this moment that the warrior Zeal should leap into his chariot and shake loosely the slack reins. Corybantic Christianity! The Corybants of heathen mythology clashed their weapons to save from tyrannous oppression a sacred life, and I for one should prefer infinitely the reality, the sincerity, the genuine emotion even of what might be sneered at as Corybantic Christianity, even if deformed by eccentricities. Our choice is not shut up between the two; and if it is to be a choice, I for one should infinitely prefer that reality to the Christianity that had gone dead and cold in the embrace of function and tradition, and which, like the glassy ripple on the Dead Sea surface, hides stagnation in its heart; such Corybantic Christianity as that of which it was said, after the rushing wind and descending flame of Pentecost, by all the sneering respectabilities at Jerusalem, "These men are full of new wine."

I end. I have spoken freely; I can do nothing else. If any man ask me, as Mary Queen of Scots asked Knox, "Who are you?" I answer: I am nothing and nobody; unworthy to plead a cause which yet ought to be pleaded, and which makes me speak to you now, delaying and detaining you thus rudely, and no doubt as will be said thus self-assertingly, because I speak to you the truths which I know to be more necessary to the Church and realm of England than ten thousand soft conventionalities. Let every voice be raised, if it will, to condemn; let every newspaper, religious and irreligious, indulge in its peculiar sneer; but if ever a base self-interest, or, much as I

love peace, if ever a yearning for a cowardly peace should tempt me to hold back such truths as God bids me speak and bids me see, may He smite my brain with foolishness and paralyse my tongue with death! But, oh! may God send forth His Seraphim with a hallowed coal from His altar to touch and hallow the lips of whom He will; may He grant that my message, if it falls dead as the seed upon the trampled and barren wayside—trampled and barren with the waggons of business and of wordly concerns —may He still grant that if lost to all other, it may still be by His grace as fire to at least but one soul here; and may He grant to you who shall now be consecrated fathers of the Church of God—to you, O brother! who will carry to the Indian Ocean the message of the gospel; and to you, O Christian brother! and kind friend of many years, who will rule a great diocese at home—may He grant you resolution to speak, energy to act, strength to labour, patience to endure, so that whatever men may say or do unto you it matters nothing at all. To you, as humble and toilsome labourers in His vineyard, the Voice *ite venite* shall settle all controversies for ever, shall at last thrill and flood your souls with the unimaginable ecstasy of those to whom it shall be given to hear His blessed words, "Well done, thou good and faithful, enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

# A SERVANT OF CHRIST.

By the Rev. W. F. Moulton, M.A., D.D.*

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii. 13, 14.

WITH these words St. Paul closes a memorable passage in the Epistle which he addressed to the best-beloved of all his churches. The pretensions of false teachers who sought to undermine his authority, that they might subvert his doctrine, have led him for a moment to speak of claims which he, too, might have advanced had his principles been akin to theirs. But, with characteristic self-abnegation, the fruit at once of genuine humility and of loyalty to truth, he enumerates possessions only to renounce them, claims pre-eminence only to confess how utterly he had been constrained to cast it all aside. There is no trace of the vanity which displays the sacrifices made for the cause espoused. Nay, rather, every ground of boasting, every "gain," is compelled by the touch of an Ithuriel's spear to

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reveal itself in its proper form. The "gain" shows itself as "loss"; the prized inheritance is very refuse. As long as Paul was rich he was poor; when he left all, and not till then, could he find the Christ.

But his present attitude is such as may well amaze us as we read. When the twelve were called by Christ, they, too, left all, and followed Him. They renounced what would have kept them back from Him; but they found Him, they lived in His presence, by His words were they trained, His spirit was their life. St. Paul has lost, but has he found? No word asserts a possession gained, every sentence proclaims that he is seeking still. He has not been baffled in his quest, but he has learned that *to be a seeker* is the aim he sought. He found—only to discover how much remains for him to find. He gains—the lifelong resolve to gain. The horizon flies before him as he seeks its bound. The Christ, the knowledge of Christ, seem most completely out of reach when most truly attained, as the informing influence of daily life. "This is life eternal," the Lord Himself has taught us, "that they may know" (and the word implies "may be ever gaining knowledge," "come more and more to know") "Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." St. Paul and St. John are at one. The stedfast purpose ever realising itself, and never completely realised, is the essence of the Christian life. No sacred teaching sanctions a thankful complacency of spirit—the sigh of glad relief when the lofty height is gained. The whole passage now before us suggests—is full of—breathless, pauseless haste. Now and

again, when the future issue comes before us, it is spoken of as if in language of doubt. It is not the doubt of the dispirited and enfeebled man, who toils along the weary road and feels his strength will fail; it is the doubt, if doubt it can be called, with which the eager athlete presses on in the race, overcoming each difficulty as he descries its presence, thinking only of the space that remains untraversed, striving whether possibly he may attain the goal. "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death," (seeking) whether I may possibly attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already received possession, or am already one made perfect; but I haste along (seeking) whether I may indeed take hold—may grasp the object which I strive to gain. You are carried along with the writer in his fervid career. You feel the influence of his breathless speed. The same thought comes before us later, but for a moment it is interrupted by a conception altogether different. Paul is first the racer who speeds along in eager hope to grasp what he seeks, and then the man whom Christ Himself has grasped. Consistency of figure gives place to truth of Christian experience. The man on whom Christ has laid hold, and only he, is the man who is fitted for the lifelong struggle. The first possession gained is to be grasped by Christ. The beginning of the Christian life is passive, not active; receiving, not giving; yielding, not victory; trust, not mastery. Fresh from the touch of Christ, he girds himself for the race to which he has been called

as by a voice from heaven. "Brethren," he cries—as if he said, "This is not an apostle's experience, an apostle's duty; if for one it is for all"—"I do not yet reckon myself to have taken hold; seeking, not attaining, is the picture of my life. But one thing I do, forgetting the space that is behind, and stretching forward over that which lies before me, I press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Nowhere, perhaps, does this servant of Christ more completely reveal himself. Other epistles depict his human life, if I may so speak, his natural affections, discouragements, temptations, sorrows, joys, sympathies. But in what we may speak of as his Christian experience this passage stands alone in its fervency and power. And yet I am earnestly solicitous that we should understand that St. Paul never made the severance, which so often seems natural to us, between Christian experience and allotted duty. I will not deny that the distinction may often appear both wise and necessary. The allotted tasks of life often seem to have very little in common with the life of faith and hope and love. The student of ancient records, the artisan whose hourly labour taxes all his faculties may well look on life as compound, and not single; and sharply distinguish the sapless wood from the living tree. Even here we know what the words of our Lord teach, and what His Spirit can effect.

But I am thinking chiefly of those whose work is like St. Paul's—not, indeed, in its maturity and splendid power, but in its character and aim. My brethren in the Christian ministry will understand

the object I have now in view. We have had the temptation before us, even if we have not yielded to its power. Conscious that no external service or ministration can bind the souls to Christ, it may be that we have unwittingly allowed ourselves to draw too sharp a line of division between our inner life, as Christ's own servants, and the sacred duties to which we have been set apart by His call, and in His presence. It is but too easy thus to put asunder what God has joined together. Let St. Paul be our teacher here. Look at the records of his life in the Acts, in the letters which he wrote, and listen to his burning words. "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation is committed unto me. . . . I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. . . . They" (they which run, they which strive) "do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Again, after describing his position while in captivity at Rome, with brethren on the one hand taking up in love his testimony for Christ, with others actuated by unfriendly purpose, he adds: "What, then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached;

and I therein do rejoice, yea, and shall rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ." Would we see how inseparable are his life and his work, let us read his pathetic address to the elders of Ephesus—the expression of his "great sorrow and unceasing pain" of heart, when he even said, "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake"—his readiness either to bear affliction or to receive comfort for the comfort and salvation of his converts—to be "offered upon the sacrifice and service" of their faith, constrained by the love of Christ.

It is hard to say where the thought of personal loyalty to Christ passes over into the thought of apostolic duty. What more personal than "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"? And yet the immediate context, as we have seen, is entirely occupied with the diffusion of the gospel message, with Christ preached in Rome. The elements of St. Paul's spiritual life were those of his spiritual work. Faith was the means of his life; faith the power through which he spoke. The love of God had been shed abroad in his heart; love impelled him to spend and be spent for the sake of men. The consecration of heart and soul to Christ was a consecration to Christ's work. By prayer he lived; by prayer utterance was given to him to make known the mystery of the gospel.

Here is the blessed privilege of the Christian minister if he is a follower of the Apostle in intensity of life. Here is his peril if his energies grow slack,

All the day long the same food sustains his highest life and his habitual work. He reads the Holy Word to his flock ; he is their guide in prayer ; he teaches, warns, points out the way of truth. As he does this in official duty he may take as he gives, feed himself as he offers food, receive help of unutterable value in the very act of helping. Here is his present rich reward. And yet there is no certainty that so it will be with him, for the outward habit may remain when the life of it is gone, and the very ministration of God's bounty may be used to starve the soul.

Here minister and people in some measure stand apart. Both have hours of directly sacred labour, both are more or less involved in the cares of secular toil. But the minister of Christ has, or ought to have, but little of these worldly cares, and those to whom he ministers must have many. Yet amidst these many lower but still necessary toils there must be found room for the higher efforts to do work like that of Christ. Leave no work unsanctified ; make the whole life Christian ! But be not satisfied till some portion of the precious time God lends can be devoted to Christ's saving work. In that you will find your own spiritual sustenance. Whatever has been said to ministers of Christ's Church applies to all workers in so far as they can minister Christ. Life and work must co-exist, each throwing light upon the other, each fostering the other, till the day when the earthly yields to the heavenly, and there exist no longer any care, any toil which can be called secular, or can absorb a thought away from Christ.

The subject of our thoughts this afternoon has

been St. Paul; the occasion which has suggested the subject has been the life and labours of the servant of Christ, the follower of the Apostles, whom we commemorate to-day. To fulfil my appointed task I came anew to the study of John Wesley's wonderful career. I came without expectation that I could add to the rich store of knowledge we possess. On every hand we meet with students of the history. Friends, dissentients, and (in trifling number) foes have given us their varied impressions of the character and achievements of the foremost evangelist of the eighteenth century. On such a theme one cannot hope to speak with freshness or the attractiveness of novelty.

That is not my aim. I have sought to imbue myself with the spirit of the man we all revere, to follow his life till I could feel the hidden spring of all his activity and influence. And the spring is here. Underlying and including all he planned and all he accomplished during half a century is this one principle of St. Paul. Looked at from any other point of view than one, John Wesley's life was manifold, inconsistent, heterogeneous. This simple clue leads through what some have regarded as a labyrinth, this light shows harmony amongst actions apparently discordant. No other principle than his can make it possible for successors to continue his work; and hence the words we have been considering most fitly suit the day which ends a hundred years of Methodist toil in the absence of its founder, and which begins a new era for our Church. The picture of the Oxford scholar is familiar to us all. Not less well known is

the strict High Churchman, overwhelmed by strong convictions as to sin and holiness, in labours more abundant, living in complete devotedness to the service of man for Christ's sake ; in all this—yet never by means of all this—striving to save his soul. Through the power of the same impulse he went to preach among the Indians of Georgia. "Our end in leaving our native country was simply this—to save our souls, to live wholly to the glory of God." He is a man who has but one business, "to exercise himself unto godliness." Painful experience, faithful help, led him into the liberty of the gospel, and into conscious union with the Lord he loved. Church order was dear to him ; to the Church of his fathers he would not willingly be disobedient in a single point of discipline. "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" was the cry of his heart, and wherever churches were opened he proclaimed the message God had given him. But so great was the shock which the doctrine of conversion—*necessary* conversion, justification by faith alone, man's ruin unless saved by grace—gave to the easy, decorous orthodoxy of the age, that church after church was closed against the evangelist, now brought face to face with a choice terrible to him. By preaching still in parishes forbidden him, he will incur the charge of schism ; by holding his peace he will set at nought the command of God. "God in Scripture commands me to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another's parish—that is, in effect, to do it at all. Whom, then, shall I hear —God or man? Suffer me now to tell you my

principles in this matter. I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far, I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation." "Catholic principles," if by this men meant "any other than Scriptural," weighed nothing with him. Preaching in the open air was at first a thing abhorrent to his taste and convictions. "I could scarce reconcile myself to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which Mr. Whitefield set me an example, having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church." Yet at a later day he wrote: "It is field preaching which does the execution still; for usefulness there is none comparable to it." All his work he looked on as work compatible with faithfulness to his Church. Nothing that he raised up was designed by him to stand in its place or undermine its influence; he wished to extend, to supplement, to increase the true strength of the Church by his disregard of human limitations which were dangerous and hurtful. All that he regarded as essential in the Church of England commanded his reverent love. The Church prayers he found "full of life." Usages which, though not claiming vital importance, his Church had inherited from primitive times, were altogether to his taste; though, as his time and thoughts became absorbed in practical labour, we hear little about most of these from him. Church seasons were times of especial enjoyment to this loyal son. All Saints' Day

lifted his rapt soul into the joys of the communion of saints. To such a man, thus bound by ancestral ties, attached to the Church in all the tastes and habits of his life, one with the Church in the strongest convictions of his mature thought, the very idea of desertion was intolerable; and with all his power, with words of the greatest vehemence, with reiterated appeal, he cried out against separation. He was in his own belief to the very last a true member of the Church of England. And yet, with an inconsistency which he acknowledged, though he seems never to have deeply felt its force, he broke through the most binding laws of the Church he so much loved. Three years before his death he reviewed his action in this regard. He specifies the points of discipline in which he and his followers had taken a separate course. They had preached in the fields. They had used extemporary prayer. They had employed lay preachers, had formed and regulated societies, had held yearly Conferences. But they were not conscious of varying from the Church in any point of doctrine; nor had they premeditatedly or willingly varied even in a single article of discipline. What variations there had been he declares had been forced on them. "We did none of these things till we were convinced we could no longer omit them but at the peril of our souls." The one chief transgression of Church Order Mr. Wesley does not in this passage directly specify. Though only a presbyter, he had presumed to *ordain*. Most unwillingly, after long hesitation, did he come to this point, the crowning point of disunion. The work of God required that men should be set apart to

help. Lay evangelists could accomplish very much, but they could not furnish to the souls whom God had given him all they needed. The Lord who had saved these souls in myriads, and had prescribed the needed ministries of grace, could not design that these ministries should be wanting. John Wesley sought earnestly that the want might be supplied according to the established usage of his Church ; but he sought in vain. Still he was fain to struggle on with the small band of clergymen who lent their aid. But wider claims pressed upon him ; followers in distant lands had no such provision as his flock at home possessed, and—lest God's work should suffer—this loyal-hearted Churchman at last passed the Rubicon, and assumed what hitherto he had held to be a bishop's right, and ordained pastors and superintendents of the Church. The action brought him obloquy, but there was no misgiving in his mind. He felt himself linked with primitive times, but in such actions he offered in sacrifice the instincts and habits of his life. To a man so constituted the wrench was terrible. All these actions of his were consistent in their inconsistency : "This one thing I do." To spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land was the one object of his life ; whatever conflicted with this must be thrust aside ; whatever this entailed must be accepted as ordained by God. A man so single in his aim could be turned aside by no opposition from friend or enemy. Raging mobs assailed his people, and laid hands on himself. With calm courage he faced his foes, and daunted them by his simple stedfastness. "He who fears God," says Leighton,

"knows no other fear"; and this righteous man was "bold as a lion." His reputation was from time to time threatened by slanderers; he could not pause to defend his good name, for his record was on high, and to God he committed his cause. His keen, logical mind delighted in definitions and in points of dogma carefully laid down, and yet he is never weary of proclaiming the worthlessness of mere orthodoxy and right opinion. The very man who effectually secured the adherence of his workers after him to the general body of teaching which he received as truth, glories in the possibility of combining the love and service of God with most diverse convictions as to points of doctrine. "Is a man a believer in Jesus Christ? and is his life suitable to his profession? are not only the *main* but the *sole* inquiries I make in order to his admission into our society." Vehement in maintaining essential truth, stringent, even to apparent intolerance, in correcting practical error, whether promulgated by friends or by foes, he was just as ready to accept correction; he went through life seeking to learn, accepting new light with eagerness. He took up the burden of responsibility, when Providence assigned it to him, with a readiness that smaller and less single-hearted men have wholly failed to understand. "Ambition was his ruling passion," says one; "he was an autocrat who clung to power with tenacious grip, as for very life," is the opinion of others. But patient study of his life has vindicated, as well the ruler as the preacher of Methodism. Only a firm rule could keep together the hosts of converts which God had brought together,

the helpers whom He had called to work at his side. But here, also, were the certain signs of the single aim —nothing for himself, everything for the work of God! Unwearied, unfaltering, thinking nothing done if only something remained to be done, strong in the consciousness that the cause was God's, upheld by the habitual reference of all difficulty, perplexity, misadventure, persecution to the same Almighty and All-wise Guide, he patiently and calmly, but at full stretch and without a thought of faltering, went through his amazing course of toil, leaving to all his followers the spectacle of labours that perhaps no man had surpassed. When more than sixty years of age he preached fifteen or sixteen times a week—at particular periods, as often as eighty or ninety times a month. Even beyond the age of eighty-seven he still pursued his unresting toil; and his last sermon was preached only a week before his death.

The lesson of this wonderful life is not impaired when we listen to the imperious demand which critics make that we should acknowledge the presence of faults and weaknesses of intellect or character. We set up no object of worship in the man we one and all revere. True, we say but little in the critic's peculiar vein; for what reverent and loving child will keenly scrutinise a parent's features that he may find a wrinkle or a scar? We whose calling it is to imitate the grand life-purpose feel our littleness too deeply to be willing to dwell long on this or that alleged error of judgment or mistake in action. But this we fearlessly declare, that the inconsistencies and shortcomings to which many point with scorn or

ridicule do but make the lesson of the life more manifest and enhance its greatness.

Let us come back to his own words in description of the consistent attitude of his whole career. They are well-known words; but in their solemnity, their vividness, their transparent truthfulness, they are ever fresh, ever fraught with energy and power: "To candid reasonable men," he says, in the preface to his "Sermons," written in the year 1747, "I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God—just hovering over the great gulf, till a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing—the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way. For this very end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. Oh, give me that book! At any price, give me the Book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book. Here, then, I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His Book; for this end—to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of Lights: 'Lord, is it not Thy word?' 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God.' Thou 'givest liberally, and upbraidest not.' Thou hast said, 'If any be willing to do Thy will, he shall know.' I

am willing to do; 'let me know Thy will.' I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture, 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual.' I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God, and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn that I teach. I have accordingly set down in the following sermons what I find in the Bible concerning the way to heaven, with a view to distinguish this way of God from all those which are the inventions of men. I have endeavoured to describe the true, the Scriptural, experimental religion, so as to omit nothing which is a real part thereof, and to add nothing thereto which is not. And herein it is more especially my desire, first, to guard those who are just setting their faces toward heaven (and who, having little acquaintance with the things of God, are the more liable to be turned out of the way) from formality, from mere outside religion, which has almost driven heart religion out of the world; and, secondly, to warn those who know the religion of the heart, the faith which worketh by love, lest at any time they make void the law through faith, and so fall back into the snare of the devil."

These memorable words show that Wesley was "ambitious" and an enthusiast. His enthusiasm was to save the perishing and to raise up for God a holy people; his ambition was to be a father to those whom by God's grace he had gathered from the world. In the simplicity of his purpose, in the single-

heartedness of his toil, he, were he present with us now, would rebuke the expression of our filial reverence and love, if we rested content with admiration of a life-service long since fulfilled. The justification of our study of the past is in the teaching which it affords for the present age and ages yet to come.

The Divine method of training is through the power of example. One perfect model has been granted to man, "How sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "He, that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." The life of Christ, like the words of Christ, is ever in advance of man. As successive ages bring stores of added knowledge, and develop new powers, and bring to light new wants, they at the same time and by consequence prepare men for discovering the wider scope and deeper meaning of the words that have grown familiar and the well-known features of the perfect life. But lower examples possess a power of their own. "Be ye imitators of me," says the Apostle Paul, "even as I am of Christ." With limited range, with conditioned application, the example of an apostle, because nearer to our level, may be fraught with special blessing. Descending lower still, but still high above us, the consecrated lives of the great and good are powerful to raise us towards the higher region in which they served their Lord. But if their example is easier for our study and contemplation, the principles displayed can less certainly be taken *as they are* for the shaping of our

life. Each man is moulded by his age, even though his stamp impress itself again upon that age. In our study of the heroes of the past, we must learn to distinguish between what is fleeting and what is permanent in the characteristics of their life. The action of a past year may be out of place to-day, though its living spirit may be the very guide we this moment need.

It would be a task of deepest interest and lasting importance to inquire how John Wesley's life, from first to last, stood related to the spirit of the eighteenth century. This is a subject I cannot touch to-day. We have a harder task before us—a problem not to be solved in this brief hour, but to be worked out by us all; for, even if it be in spite of ourselves, we must be makers of history. How may the lessons of John Wesley's life be adapted to the conditions of the age in which we live? It is idle to exclaim that they may be adopted without change, that we may imitate as a faithful copyist reproduces the manuscript before him. We live in an age whose novel characteristics have hardly yet lost their power to cause surprise. The world of thought has been revolutionised by the spirit of historical study, and by the wonderful scientific discoveries of our time. A deeper and truer study of events in their mutual relations, a more exact investigation of the witness that describes the past, would have given firm compactness to our knowledge of that which was in earlier days. We may have lost by the tendency to rest content with second causes, but the light of an ever-present Providence will soon illumine all the scene. There has been a

deeper study of men, and complex human nature is felt to possess true unity. There is a more real and profound sympathy between man and man. We rejoice in a growing spirit of toleration, though we see with troubled hearts how easily our respect for the convictions of others may pass into an enervating influence so that we feebly grasp our own. The amazing revelations of physical science have re-organised our modes of life. Separate communities have developed into a single, ever-moving mass of human life; and, as many have gone to and fro, knowledge has been increased and experience widened. Alas! life has well-nigh lost its quietness; the impetuous torrent rushes past, and we look on with bewilderment. The hurry of life has led to a longing for compensating ease and comfort, and a spirit of indulgence hovers about us, threatening many of us with the curse of indolence and sloth. The keen scientific method claims admission everywhere, and will bring all things to the test. Creeds and dogmas that have stood the scrutiny of centuries are fearlessly put to the question. There is distrust of established formulas; veneration retires, respect for authority as authority grows ever less. Thankfully, however, do we recognise a growth in sincerity, a hatred of hollow profession and impatience, when the life belies the creed uttered by the lips. Man's life is developed on many sides, and a broader culture (we may well believe) is preparing the way for more perfect and deeper knowledge. The Church of Christ has felt both the stimulating influence and the testing power of the new spirit that breathes around us. In the

midst there has been the ever-present Spirit of God. His blessed influence has at one time been brought to clearer manifestation by the influences we have traced, but at another it has been disguised and trammelled by the adverse forces which have been permitted for a while to exert their power. In the Church of England we recognise a marvellous revival of religious earnestness and personal devotion. We mourn as a child for a parent when we see the noble organism animated by a spirit of priestliness which often prevents true fellowship of the sinner with his Saviour. By the side of the Church of England other noble and powerful churches are rising into new life and vigour. The blessed message of God's love was never more widely diffused; but, on the other hand, doctrines which seem to us the true criterion of a standing or a falling church are not always proclaimed with a clear and certain sound. Most of all is our gratitude kindled by the abounding zeal with which the Holy Word of God is studied, the loving care with which every line of Sacred Writ is scanned. The strong light which has been concentrated on the written revelation has disclosed new problems and new difficulties; but difficulties have from the beginning been the alluring charm by which God has drawn us on from stage to stage in our pursuit of truth. The Church has recognised its full responsibility for the life of men to whom it sends forth the call of God's Spirit, and if the new be so guided as not to eclipse the old, if the spirit of evangelistic work move side by side with that of social amelioration and tender beneficence, we may look forward with

exultant hope to the triumph of love over a selfish world. Hurry and turmoil invade us even in these sacred courts. Terribly has the Church suffered from the frequent sacrifice of quiet hours, privacy in working, meditative study amid the atmosphere of fervent and continued prayer. But great has been the gain by the wide diffusion of sacred knowledge, by the influence which has been seized for good by many who have understood that light is power, and have dragged the deeds of darkness from the secret places in which they had lingered from age to age. The influences throughout have been of mingled character; evil and good have been at war. But the evil tendencies may be resisted, and the good lead on to victory. But, whether for evil or for good, these are the moulding forces of our age. We may look back on a former age, and say: "How easy would it then have been to live!" But this is a world of cowardice, not faith. The present *must* bring difficulty, because the Christian life is a life of faith. We may fear when we "enter into the cloud," but it is only through the cloud that we can win our way to the light.

*What shall our future be?* The Methodism of to-day has already felt the influence of those very forces which we have passed under review. I have not attempted to trace the difference between Methodism as it is to-day, and as it was when its founder passed from earth's conflict to heaven's rest. This is a matter of historical inquiry, most attractive and most beneficial if thoroughly pursued. But we are not historians, we are men of action, women of action.

The future waits for us who are the living Methodists of to-day, depends upon us, must be moulded by us. In so far as we apprehend and make our own the living influences around us and within us, shall we be a source of living power for the years that are not yet born.

Oh that we may now catch the inspiration of the words with which we began our meditation this afternoon! We have seen the comment on them furnished by John Wesley's life. He was wide in his sympathies, open to all the teaching of God's providence, a man ever learning, broad in his culture, one who sought by every means and appliance to attract men and to train every power and faculty into the obedience of Christ. But the great doctrines of salvation stood first to him, and a profound Christian experience was the life of his life. O Methodists of to-day, hold fast the doctrines of our fathers with a firm and steady grip; but let them never be divorced from the Christian experience which reveals the life and soul of the doctrine themselves! May our conversion be clear, our conviction of sin intense, our joy in the Lord exultant, our consecration to Him complete! And when we pass from the thought of the common possession of all Christ's servants, and have to choose each one for himself what special gifts we shall seek, what special course we shall follow, then may we be saved from distraction by the simplicity of our aim. If we have St. Paul's singleness of purpose, St. Paul's breathless effort and energy of life, we shall be free to choose, we shall see our appointed work, we shall serve the Lord without distracting thought. Every element of life belongs to Christ;

but in the absence of the one mighty and constraining force it is possible that we may cultivate the lesser faculty and neglect the higher. Learning, and art, and science, citizenship, business, trade, recreation, literature, travel, the quiet home, the busy market, the toil of solicitude, the excitement of thronged assemblies—whatever may be the calling of each man, each woman, we shall be fitted for all our work, if the principle that guided Paul and Wesley alike is our unfailing guide. Temptations to sloth will not touch the man thus armed, wider culture will not mean a looser hold of truth, zeal for the aggrandisement of a church will not take the place of devotion to the Lord Himself. We shall live in the world, move in the world, but our life will be animated by the faith which overcomes the world, and our movement will be ceaselessly to press forward to the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"O God! to whom the faithful dead
Still live, united to their Head,
Their Lord, and ours the same,
For all Thy saints, to memory dear,
Departed in Thy faith and fear,
We bless Thy holy name!

"By the same grace upheld, may we
So follow those who followed Thee
As with them to partake
The full reward of heavenly bliss;
Merciful Father! grant us this
For our Redeemer's sake!"

# JOHN WESLEY'S CALL.

By the Rev. R. W. Dale, D.D., LL.D.*

"But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus."—Gal. i. 15-17 (R.V.).

WHEN Paul wrote this Epistle the faith of the Galatian churches was being corrupted by Judaising teachers who assailed that large and spiritual interpretation of the gospel of Christ which was given by Paul, and who sustained their assault by insisting that he was not one of the original apostles who had received their authority from our Lord, and that the original apostles had given him no commission. He does not attempt to qualify his independence of the first preachers of the Christian gospel, the divinely authorised founders of the Christian Church; he shows a certain cagerness and exultation in asserting it. He asserts it in the very first sentence of his letter. He is not an apostle "of men," his commission is from Heaven; and his commission had not come

* Preached at the centenary celebration of the death of John Wesley, in City Road Chapel, on Wednesday morning, March 4th, 1891.

to him "through men." He had not received it through the intervention of any Church rulers to whom Christ had delegated any part of His power, but direct from Jesus Christ Himself, and God the Father who raised Him from the dead. He will stand in no succession: this, for which his enemies reproached him, is the secret of his power; in this he glories.

In the text he expands the declaration with which the letter begins. It was the good pleasure of God, God's free, spontaneous, unsought, unmerited grace, that had made him an apostle, and this grace had been manifested in several ways. First, he says, "From my very birth God separated me to this work." As Paul looked back upon his life he could see that the Divine purpose had been controlling his personal history from the very first, and preparing him for a service of which he had no thought, and which, if it had been proposed to him, he would have regarded with horror. His birth, by which he inherited the rights of Roman citizenship, though he was also of the stock of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, his early years in Tarsus, a great Greek city famous or its wealth, its commerce, and its schools of learning and philosophy, his life as a student in Jerusalem, his zeal in mastering the doctrines and methods of the rabbis, the earnestness and fidelity with which he had submitted to the discipline of the most austere of the Jewish sects, so that, "touching the righteousness which is in the law," he was "blameless,"—all these had contributed in various ways to his fitness for the work to which, though he knew it not, God had destined him.

Secondly, God Himself, without the intervention of the apostles, without human intervention of any kind, had spoken to him the strong and gracious word which had broken his heart to penitence, and which had drawn him to Christ. There had been no movement towards Christ on his own part; he was on his way to Damascus, vehement, passionate in his hatred of the new sect, resolved to suppress it. It was God's grace, what else! that called him to receive the Christian redemption, and to preach the Christian gospel. At that point, indeed, his own free response to the grace of God came in. Till now all that God had done to prepare him for his apostleship was done without any free and conscious concurrence of his in God's great purpose; he had known nothing of it. But now he might have thwarted and defeated the Divine love. But, as he says elsewhere, he was not disobedient to that heavenly vision.

And, thirdly, he adds, "It was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles." The revelation came to him, not merely for his own sake, but for the sake of the heathen men to whom he was to preach the gospel, and it therefore came to him in a form which was determined by their condition as well as by his own.

Now these three manifestations of God's free spontaneous grace to Paul have their parallel in the history of John Wesley, whose great and venerable name has drawn us together this morning. First, he, too, might have said that from his birth God had separated, set him apart for the work of recovering large masses

of English people from irreligion and vice, and founding a religious society which would extend to all lands. There was a heroic strain in his blood. His parents on both sides were the descendants of Puritan ministers who had endured cruel persecution for their fidelity to what they believed to be the will of God. But he was saved in God's providence from the peril which always comes upon men who are the heirs of great religious movements which have spent their strength. He was not to attempt to rekindle the glorious fires of Puritanism, so he was born, not a Nonconformist, but in a country rectory. In the discipline of his childhood and youth, a reverence for authority and a care for the external institutions and aids of the religious life characteristic of the great Anglicans, were blended with the traditions of Puritanism. His father, a High Churchman, was a man of courage and zeal, deeply moved, as you all know, by the condition of heathen countries, and he proposed a scheme for carrying the gospel of Christ to the remotest shores that had been reached by English trade, and offered to go out among the first missionaries. For his mother, John Wesley had always the profoundest reverence. She was a woman of remarkable natural sagacity, and he had almost unmeasured confidence in her judgment. She had a vigorous and cultivated mind, and there was great depth and strength in her religious life. As he was passing from youth to manhood, the best elements in the Oxford of those days, and the worst—the zeal for righteousness of the small group of young men of whom he became the leader—the scorn, the mock, the insult which

their zeal provoked; both these were part of the discipline by which he was prepared for his true work. His experience in Georgia was part of it; by God's grace he had been "separated from his very birth."

Secondly, by God's grace he was called, if not with the accompaniment of visible miracle as Paul was called on the road to Damascus, yet by a movement of the Divine love, not less free, not less supernatural. John Wesley would have said, with an earnestness as deep and as passionate as that of the most faithful disciple of John Calvin, "I sought God because He sought me; I found God because God found me." The saints are divided by their theologies, but they are one in their faith, and they all confess, "We love Him because He first loved us."

It is, however, to the third illustration of God's grace in Wesley that I propose to direct your attention and consideration. He, too, could have said with Paul, "It was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him." You will understand at once that I refer to the experience through which he passed on the evening of Wednesday, May 24th, 1738, when he was thirty-five years of age, an experience so remarkable that for many years he was accustomed to speak of it as his real conversion, the time when his sins were forgiven, the beginning of his life in God, through Christ. That wonderful experience, that revelation of Christ had, as I think, a direct and vital relation to all that has given to the name of John Wesley an enduring place in the history of Christendom. But for *that* there would have been no Methodist revival; but for *that*

the great sisterhood of Methodist societies represented at this commemoration, belonging to many races, speaking many tongues, and which might be described in pardonable exaggeration as gathered out of every country under heaven,—but for that great experience, that revelation of Christ to John Wesley, these societies would have had no existence. The good pleasure of God, the purpose of His grace, in relation to England and to the world might have been fulfilled in other ways, not by you and by your fathers.

Nor is it the Methodist societies alone that have reason to look back with deep and devout interest to that memorable hour. As you have done me the great and unmerited honour of permitting me to be here this morning, I desire to acknowledge with devout gratitude the grace of God, which through you has reached many churches having an earlier origin than yours, and a polity different from your own; churches which for more than two generations were widely separated from you by mutual distrust, distrust created in part by serious theological differences, and in part by differences in relation to evangelistic matters and the discipline of the spiritual life. The obligations which the elder Nonconformist churches of England owe to Methodism cannot be measured. When John Wesley began his work their strength had been seriously diminished; there were complaints that the congregations were wasting away; that the sons and the daughters of the wealthier Nonconformists were passing over to the Episcopal Church. It was said that between the accession of George I. in 1714 and the year 1734 more than fifty dissenting

ministers took orders in the Establishment. Those who contested the accuracy of the stronger statements concerning the decay of the dissenting interest, and who insisted that if in some parts of the country dissenting churches were declining in other parts their strength was growing, acknowledged that the Dissenters were generally discouraged, that they were suffering from a want of buoyancy and energy in their religious life, that the stricter manners and the severer morals of early generations were disappearing, and that the movement of theological thought among them gave occasion to great anxiety. But Wesley's Arminianism filled them with alarm, nor was their alarm without reason. There had been a great drifting among the Nonconformist churches the first thirty or forty years of the eighteenth century from the central articles of the Christian faith, and this was one of the principal causes of their weakness. The divinity of our Lord had been denied, and the atonement which He achieved for men by His death; and these grave and ruinous errors had almost always begun with a surrender of the characteristic doctrines of Calvinism. Even where Arminianism had not come to these disastrous issues, it had paralysed the strength of Christian faith in the early Nonconformist churches, and quenched the fire of spiritual earnestness. But creeds which coincide in some of their principal articles may cover wholly different systems of religious thought, and wholly different conditions of the spiritual life. The Arminianism of many Nonconformists at the beginning of the eighteenth century appears to have come in part from that cold

and powerless conception of God which is given by Deism, a conception which removes Him to an infinite distance from all His creatures, and leaves man to work out his own destiny in an environment of unchanging and mechanical laws. It was the result of a decay in their sense of the energy and freedom of the life of the Eternal, and of God's immanent presence and activity in the material universe and in man. It affirmed that man was free partly because it conceived of God as being remote. Wesley's Arminianism had a wholly different root. For him the universe was not a wonderful mechanism which had been projected into being by a succession of creative acts, and then left to work according to the laws of its structure. For Him God did not live apart from the creation, and so leave man free, reigning in heights of inaccessible majesty. He believed that in God we live and move and have our being. Yet in the strength of his own moral life he had a most vivid consciousness that he was morally free, free to receive or to reject the infinite grace which the living God was pressing upon him; therefore he was an Arminian. For a time serious Nonconformists did not discover the immense moral and spiritual difference between the old Arminianism and the new. The walls of mutual distrust which separated your fathers and mine stood firm without a breach till long after George III. was king. But the fires which were kindled on your side were burning so fiercely that the heat came through. The flames rose high, and the sparks fell over. You made the very atmosphere so hot that the dry timber took

fire, we knew not how. We listened at first reluctantly to Whitefield and the leaders of the Calvinistic revival. We discovered that God was doing a wonderful work before our very eyes, though it was not being done according to our traditions. Then we began to listen to you. It was not very far from the Tabernacle to the Foundery. Then we began to draw closer to each other. I could give you a considerable list of eminent Congregational ministers who, towards the close of last century and the beginning of this, brought to the service of the Congregational Church the religious life which had been originated, the religious zeal which had been kindled among Methodists.

William Jay, of Bath, discovered the glory and grace of the Christian redemption at a Methodist service at Tisbury. My colleague and predecessor, John Angell James, did not attribute his religious decision to Methodist preaching; but when he was a boy at Blandford the only religious fire in the town was among the Methodists. He was taken by his mother to Methodist meetings on Sunday nights, and there was a touch of Methodism in him to the very last; he always smelt of that fire. Thomas Raffles, of Liverpool, in his early life was a member of the Wesleyan Society. John Leifchild, of Craven, was originally one of your preachers. The great revival which originated Methodism restored through God life, vigour, courage and fervour to the Congregational churches of England.

And, as I have said, Methodism owes its existence, under God, to that great experience through

which John Wesley passed in a little room within, I suppose, a mile of this place, on the evening of May 24th, 1738. You all know the story. I am conscious of presumption in venturing to speak about it in such an assembly as this, but at such a time as this we are here to talk about what we all know; and for my part I do not much care to speak about anything else; and so, will you bear with me? Wesley became a fellow of Lincoln in 1726, and from that time, as you know, his great concern was to live a religious life. During the following twelve years the earnestness with which he endeavoured to carry out his purposes was constantly becoming more intense. He subjected himself to a severe discipline, strove against all sin, pursued inward holiness, the union of the soul with God. He became the leader of a number of devout young men who were of the same mind as himself, and was their counsellor and their strong support. He had a passion for the conversion of the heathen, and went out to Georgia with the view of being able to preach the gospel to the Indians in that part of America. The attention of the whole University of Oxford was drawn to his extraordinary zeal. When he returned from America, he was in an agony of distress about his own soul. He had gone to Georgia to convert the heathen, and he had learned, so he thought, that he himself was not converted. In his later years he modified his opinion concerning the true nature of the experience through which he passed in May 1738. He came to the conclusion that he was not, as he had supposed, alienated from the life of God till then, a child of

wrath, an heir of hell; and I suppose that most of us who have read his journals must be of the same judgment. But he always retained a belief that that great experience was of transcendent importance: in this he was wholly right. If not critical for Wesley in the way he once supposed, it was critical for Methodism. Immediately after he had passed through it he wrote an explanation of what he believed to have been the fatal defect of his previous religious life. "On my return to England—January 1738—being in imminent danger of death, and very uneasy on that account, I was strongly convinced that the cause of that uneasiness was unbelief, and that the gaining of a true living faith was the one thing needful for me. But still I fixed not this faith on its right object; I meant only faith in God, not faith in or through Christ. Again, I knew not that I was wholly void of this faith, but only thought that I had not enough of it." As the result of his conversations with Peter Böhler, he came to see that he must renounce all dependence in whole or in part upon his own works or righteousness, and seek by continued prayer what he describes as "a justifying saving faith, a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for me, a trust in Him as my sole justification, my sanctification and redemption." The faith came. Listen, some of you for the hundredth time, listen to his own account of what happened on that memorable night. "I went," he says, "very unwillingly to a Society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the

change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed; I felt I had a trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Tell me, tell me whether he might not have described all that in Paul's own words, "It was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son." Is there any account to be given of the nature and source of the change through which, by God's grace, he passed on that evening? I will make the attempt. It is apparent that at the very core of Wesley's nature there was an immovable conviction that his will was morally free. This made him an Arminian. His acts were his own; they were not determined by blind fate or Divine decrees. It is also apparent that to him the Divine law was august, awful. He saw, as few men had ever seen, the infinite significance of the contrast between obedience and disobedience, sin and righteousness. He had sinned, and his sense of guilt sometimes became intolerable. During his misery he felt that it was God's own hand that was heavy upon him, and that the condemnation of conscience revealed, but only partially revealed, the more appalling condemnation of God. Further, it is apparent that he believed that our knowledge of God is real as far as it goes, and that what we call His attributes are not mere subjective representations of Him determined by the structure and laws of our own mind, but answer to something real and objective in the life of the Eternal. But as His will is not identical with His knowledge, His justice is not

identical with His grace. In one of his sermons he speaks of men who quiet their fears by saying, "'God is merciful,' confounding and swallowing up all at once in that unwieldy idea of mercy all His holiness and essential hatred of sin, all His justice, and wisdom, and truth." He knew that God was merciful, His mercy had been revealed in Christ, who had come to seek and to save the lost, and who had set forth the freedom of the Divine grace in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Yes! but God was just, and to Wesley the justice was as real as the mercy, and as essential an element and force in God's eternal, unchangeable, absolute life.

Indeed, apart from justice, mercy cannot even be thought, any more than the finite can be thought apart from the infinite, the relative apart from the absolute. There is no mercy where there is no guilt. If sin is nothing more than a transient, though necessary incident of human development, or if it is nothing more than a disease of the moral life, it needs no forgiveness; there is nothing in it to forgive, because justice finds in it nothing to condemn. If a disease, and nothing more, it appeals not to the Divine mercy to pardon, but to the Divine compassion and power to cure. If a necessary incident in the development of the moral life of man, then, again, as it cannot be the object of Divine hostility and resentment, there is nothing in it for the Divine mercy to forgive; it will gradually disappear in the pre-determined processes of that Divine movement by which the race is advancing towards perfection. But to Wesley his own sin was a violent and voluntary disturbance of

the ordered relations between man and God. It was not a misfortune, but a crime. The responsibility for it was his, the guilt of it was his, and he believed, and believed rightly, that his sense of guilt was in truth his apprehension and sense of the righteousness of the Living God condemning him for his sin, and menacing him with awful punishment. It was because he was justly condemned, and because he was justly menaced with punishment, that he was in such sore need of mercy. He had heard, he had received, he had preached the gospel of the Divine grace, offering to all men the remission of sins; but his conscience, the central force of Wesley's life, demanded a gospel, a gospel of which during the twelve years preceding 1738 he had no real grasp. And this prevented him from finding peace. Justice condemned him if mercy forgave him. In his conception of God he could not suppress the justice even in the presence of the strongest assurances of mercy. To him the two ideas, each necessary to the other, were irreconcilable contraries. He found not their transcendent, but their actual and concrete synthesis in Christ—in Christ whose blood was shed for him; in Christ who was his sole justification, sanctification and redemption. Till now (to use his own words) his faith had not been fixed on its right object: it had been faith in God, not faith in or through Christ. Now his faith rested in Christ, and, as he says, "assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." It is no part of my duty this morning to offer any proofs of the fact that Christ died for the sins of men, or to

attempt any illustration of the mystery. It is enough that I should remind you that in John Wesley's personal discovery of the reality of the atonement, the synthesis of justice and mercy in the death of Christ, he found the inspiration and the force which, under God, created Methodism. Methodism has its roots in a living faith in Christ as a real and objective atonement for the sins of the world. Surrender that faith, and the roots of your life are destroyed.

Wesley proclaimed his new discovery with vehement energy. Within a month he was at Oxford, preaching before the University in the pulpit of St. Mary's on the text "By grace are ye saved through faith," and insisting that the death of Christ was the only sufficient means of redeeming men from death eternal; that His resurrection is the restoration of us all to life and immortality. In a later sermon, also preached before the University, he gives his definition of faith, a definition drawn from two separate sentences in the third of the Homilies of the Church of England appointed to be read in churches in the time of Queen Elizabeth. Wesley's definition so constructed reads thus—"The right and true Christian faith is not only to believe that Holy Scripture and the Articles of our faith are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ; it is a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God: whereof doth follow a loving heart to obey His commandments." He repeats the substance of this definition in several of his

sermons. It is a formal statement of the nature of that faith which had made so immense a difference in his own religious life. I do not propose to criticise it. The dullest intellect in Christendom might see that it is apparently open to a very elementary objection. If saving faith is a condition precedent of the forgiveness of sins and restoration to the favour of God, saving faith can hardly be a belief that we are forgiven and restored to His favour already. But as this objection is so very obvious that it must occur to the dullest of men, as soon as the definition is stated, modesty requires us to assume that it probably occurred to John Wesley himself, who was one of the acutest. Indeed, there is evidence that it did, as a matter of fact, occur to him. In his old age, as the result of a deeper knowledge of the ways of God and of the religious life of man—not, as I can see, for mere logical reasons—he modified his judgment concerning the nature and contents of what the theologians call "saving faith." "Nearly fifty years ago," he says, "when the preachers commonly called Methodists began to preach the important Scriptural doctrine of salvation by faith, they were not sufficiently apprised of the difference between a servant and a child of God." He now, with a breadth of thought which is not commonly attributable to any of the men of the evangelical revival, defines faith as "such a Divine conviction of God as even in its infant state enables every one that possesses it to fear God and work righteousness; and whosoever in every nation believes thus far, the Apostle declares, is accepted of Him; he actually is at that very moment in a state

of acceptance, but he is at present only a servant of God, not properly a son. In the meantime, let it be well observed that the wrath of God no longer abideth on him." But Wesley still insisted on the power and the blessedness of the higher faith, the faith which he describes as a Divine conviction whereby every child of God is enabled to testify that, "The life that I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." He still presses upon those whose faith is of the lower kind the obligation to seek the higher. He confidently assures them that if they seek it they will sooner or later possess it. In the earlier years of the movement he had refused to recognise the distinction implied by the terms "faith of adherence" and "faith of assurance." He found no such terms in the Bible. There were not two faiths in one Lord, but one faith in one Lord. He said that he had never known a man saved from outward and inward sin without what was called the faith of assurance; a sure confidence that by the merits of Christ he was reconciled to the mercy of God. If he allowed any distinction between the faith of adherence and the faith of assurance, he insisted—and this to the older divines must have been extremely startling—that the faith of assurance came first. There were good reasons, no doubt, for revising his original definition. It was true, as he said, that the earlier teaching made sad the hearts of those whom God had not made sad, and led to the discouragement, perhaps to the fatal discouragement, of many sincere penitents. And yet the paradoxical definition of saving faith as a sure trust and confidence which

a man hath in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he is reconciled to the favour of God, is perhaps truer than it seems. It is a paradox, no doubt; for if faith is the condition precedent to salvation, how can it be a belief that we are saved already?

But the definition is the result of a violent effort breaking through the forms of the logical understanding to express transcendent spiritual realities. For is it not true that God has already given us, has given to all men, believers and unbelievers alike, eternal redemption in Christ? Is it not true that we can trust God for nothing, ask God for nothing, that lies beyond the wealth of blessing which in Christ is already ours? Does not the gift of Christ, which is a gift to the world according to the Divine thought and purpose, include all things? When we find Christ do we not discover that in Him we already possess, and had always possessed, had we but known it, all things? "Yes," it may be answered; "but until we have faith in Christ, Christ is not ours, nor are the infinite blessings of His salvation ours." Is that true? You surely of all men are not going to say that Christ died for those only who, as God foresaw, would afterwards believe on Him? You surely are not intending to introduce into the next edition of your hymn-book the famous verse of the great hymn-writer of Congregationalism?—

> "My soul looks back to see
> The burden Thou didst bear,
> When hanging on the accursed tree,
> And *hopes* her guilt was there."

You do not *hope* ; you *know*. And what you know is true for yourselves you know is also true for every man, saint or sinner, heathen or Christian, in every country and in every age, for Christ is the propitiation for the sin of the world. There is a relation between Christ and man, antecedent to man's faith, and independent of it. Faith does not create that relation, it merely accepts and consciously realises a relation which existed before faith, and apart from which faith would be impossible—a relation wonderfully and mysteriously modified by the death of Christ for our sin, but which is part of the Divine order of the universe, for in Christ were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, sun and stars, mountains and seas, angels and men ; and in Him all things consist, hold together and endure through all the millenniums of created existence. When I find Christ I do not find One who, till now, had been far from me, I find One who has always been the very ground of my being and the very root of my life. By faith I take up my citizenship in the kingdom of God ; but the citizenship was already mine by God's gift and God's purpose. By faith I accept and realise my sonship in the Divine household, but I was created in Christ to be a son ; by faith I receive and rejoice in the forgiveness of my sin, but the forgiveness was already mine in Christ Jesus my Lord. Wesley's paradox, by the very revolt to which it provokes the logical understanding, compels us to confront the transcendent mystery of the real relation of God to the human race in the Lord Jesus Christ.

His original definition of faith was organically con-

nected with the great doctrine to which Methodism has given such magnificent emphasis—that the Spirit of God bears direct witness to the spirit of man, and assures man of the forgiveness of his sins and his Divine sonship. Indeed, the faith which the definition requires is impossible, and was seen by Wesley to be impossible, apart from this witness. From the very first—from the time, I mean, that he passed through his great experience, in May 1738—Wesley saw that before the power and the joy of the Christian life are possible, it is necessary that a man should have the complete certainty that he is no longer a child of wrath, but indeed and of a truth the child of God. In this he was of one mind with Luther, for in maintaining the doctrine of justification by faith, it had been Luther's aim to recover for men that full assurance of their personal salvation which had been discouraged, if not rendered impossible, by Romish doctrine, and by the Romish discipline of the spiritual life. To the nations of Europe which received the Lutheran gospel there came a sudden burst of glorious sunshine. The clouds were driven away to distant horizons, men rejoiced in the light of God; it seemed as if the age of gold had begun. But it was not possible for Christendom to break at once with its past, the clouds gathered again too soon; the iron times returned.

When Wesley began his work the religious life of England—its best religious life—was wanting in buoyancy, in courage, in vigour, in adventure; and even among devout men that joy of the Holy Ghost, which can never be known apart from the certainty

of personal salvation, was not general. But he knew that he himself had received from God the direct assurance of the forgiveness of his sins and of his Divine sonship. He refused to believe that this was an exceptional privilege, inaccessible to other men: what he had received every man that believed in Christ might receive. All the glorious blessings which God has given to men in Christ are the common inheritance of all believers. From the very first, therefore, he insisted that no man should rest until the same Divinely authenticated certainty came to him. By the testimony of the Spirit he means "an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God, that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given Himself for me, that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God." After twenty years' consideration he sees no cause to retract any part of that statement. This doctrine seems to him one grand part of the testimony which God has given to the Methodists to bear to all mankind. He says that "it is by God's peculiar blessing upon them in searching the Scriptures, confirmed by the experience of His children, that this great evangelical truth has been recovered which had been for many years well-nigh lost and forgotten." Yes, confirmed by the experience of His children: that was the strength of Wesley's position. In the religious life of the early Methodists there was exhilaration, vigour, triumph; their joy was irrepressible; it broke out in shouts of "Hallelujah," and it sang exulting songs.

The old Dissenters were perplexed, sometimes scandalised; they heard of irreligious men, vicious men who were writhing in an agony of repentance yesterday, and were rejoicing in the certainty of forgiveness and in the sure hope of eternal glory to-day. It was not only the suddenness of the transition that confounded them, but its completeness. A fulness of assurance had come to penitents, which, as many of them supposed, was hardly possible to saints. This assurance was a large part of your power; it gave to you your hosts of preachers, preachers of many kinds and bearing many names. Personal testimony, personal testimony to the power of Christ to restore men to God, this can be given by every man to whom the witness has come. For this no protracted training at college is necessary, no Hebrew, no Greek, no mastery either of Arminius or of Calvin. The man who was drunk in the streets a week ago if he now knows Christ for himself can stand under a tree or against a wall to-day and say to every one that will listen to him, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." He needs no hours of leisure to think over that text; he has no occasion to consult commentators as to its meaning; the carpenter can put aside his saw and his plane, the blacksmith can throw down his apron and his hammer, and begin at once to expound the words. His own sin, his own salvation, these have revealed to him their wonderful contents. But for Wesley's doctrine of the witness of the Spirit Wesleyanism would never have had its great army of lay preachers and class-leaders. Will you allow me to say that if the power

of the doctrine is ever lost that army will gradually break up and waste away. But the doctrine did something more than give you lay preachers. If the new form of the religious life illustrated by Methodism perplexed the grave and thoughtful Christian men of the older churches, the common people found in it an irresistible attractiveness. It seemed to them now that the gospel was really true after all,—an actual discovery of some infinite good that was within the reach of every man, the revelation of an actual redemption which has been wrought for the human race. The loud "Amens" which came from your people, confirming the words of your preachers, the glad outcries of "Glory to God!" "Praise the Lord!" carried home the gospel to the hearts of men who might have been almost unmoved by the testimony of a solitary man. Nor was it on Sundays only, or only when engaged in religious services, that the Methodists had this abounding joy. It remained with them all the week through; there was a light resting upon their common path; their hearts were filled with music when there was no song upon their lips; and so weary men, and men who had been discouraged and broken down by trouble, and men who had begun to despair of themselves because they had been defeated in every attempt to live a better life, and men who were miserable because they hated and despised themselves for their vices, and knew that others hated and despised them too, men who had become lethargic and dull because their horizons were narrow and their occupations and thoughts monotonous, whose imaginations had never been

kindled, whose hearts had never been stirred, and men who were happy as yet but who had begun to see that the streams of earthly happiness soon run dry—all sorts of men—were charmed, excited by the discovery that people like themselves had found the springs of an immortal gladness and strength. There was mystery in it, but mystery itself has an eternal power over the hearts of men. The Methodists were filled with joy because they had found God. Is there not a secret conviction in the heart of every man that to find God is man's supreme blessedness? It was largely in the strength of that testimony to the witness of the Spirit that you won your earlier triumphs. I have said that if your faith in this doctrine ever declines, you will lose your preachers; I say now that even if you keep your preachers, their great successes would be over, for it is the common experience of the Methodist people, confirming every declaration of their preachers concerning the reality and greatness of the Christian redemption, that, under God, gives to the testimony of your preachers pathos and power.

Brethren, I have spoken with a freedom which, as a minister of another church, I had no right to assume. And yet it is not another church, for we are all one in Christ. In your strength, evangelical Christendom is strong; in your weakness, evangelical Christendom would be weak. If I have ventured to appeal to you with unbecoming and presumptuous urgency to be loyal to our common faith, it is because I am so deeply conscious that the fortunes of the Congregational churches of England, for whom I speak this

morning, cannot be separated from your own. You are the heirs of great traditions, you stand in a noble succession, but

> "They who on glorious ancestry enlarge
> Produce their debt instead of their discharge."

You have awful responsibilities to the nations in which your societies are already planted, and to the nations to which you have still to make known the unsearchable riches of God's grace. Keep faith with your fathers, keep faith with your children and your children's children, keep faith with Christ. Transmit to coming generations the gospel which has already won such splendid triumphs—that Word of God which Wesley preached and which liveth and abideth for ever. It is translated into new tongues, it is conceived in changing forms by the changing minds of men; every deeper discovery of the relations between God and man adds to its wealth and power; but it remains, that living Word of God, the same in its substance throughout all centuries, its strength unspent, its glory undimmed. It is a great gospel which you and your fathers have preached during the hundred and fifty years of your history—a gospel which declares the love of God for all men. Preach it still, with the same confidence of faith and the same passion of joy. Tell men that while they inherit by their birth the infirmities and sins of the race, they also inherit by their birth the salvation which Christ has achieved for all mankind. Tell them they live not in a lost world but a redeemed world—a world lost by its revolt against God, and

its alienation from the life of God, but redeemed by the blood of Christ, and with powers in Christ and in the Spirit of Christ which render all righteousness possible. Tell men—all men—that they were created in Christ, and that when they discover and accept their true relation to Him, they will live under new heavens and in a new earth, and know the greatness of the sons of God. Tell them that they are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ, that God chose them in Him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Tell them not to defeat the purpose of the Divine grace, but to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, and so make their calling and election sure. See to it that through God's grace you know yourselves, that by the merits of Christ your sins are forgiven, and that you are indeed and of a truth the children of God, that your testimony to the Christian redemption may not rest on tradition, but on your own personal experience and knowledge.

Assembled for this sacred commemoration, the hearts of millions of men and women in many lands are drawn to you, and they trust that in these services a Divine flame will kindle and will spread over the whole world. I think I see descending upon this assembly the glorious forms of millions of men of other generations who, through the ministry of your fathers, escaped from eternal destruction, and whose home is in the fair city of God above. We are encompassed by a great cloud of witnesses. In their presence, in God's presence, over the very ashes of your founder, whose death we commemorate, but who

lives for evermore in the light of the Eternal, I call upon you to resolve, with all the solemnity of an oath, that you will stand fast until you die in your fidelity to the truths which have given to Methodism its power and its glory, and that henceforth you will pray with a deeper earnestness and a firmer faith that the fires of Methodism may never be extinguished. I call upon you to invoke in this great hour the help of God that you may surrender yourselves to His will and His grace, with a consecration so complete and unreserved that it shall be possible for you to receive the fulness of His Spirit ; and let your hearts wait on Him in confident hope that all the fulness of the Spirit will be yours. Amen.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF WESLEY AND HIS TEACHING.

By the Rev. Principal Rainy, D.D., of the Free Church College, Edinburgh.*

"The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you."—Phil. iv. 9.

IF it is right to commemorate the mighty works of the Lord, done through His more notable servants in days gone by, then it follows that you are doing exceeding well in calling up before this generation the record of him who one hundred years ago closed his remarkable life. And when you invite some of us from other lines of ecclesiastical descent to take part in your commemoration—a summons which we receive with gratitude and pride—one asks oneself with what view the friendly invitation is given. Partly, chiefly perhaps, that it may be seen that many more besides yourselves claim part in the benefits which Wesley conferred, and are forward to own, with you, how much we all owe him. But partly also, perhaps, because you desire to hear what

* A sermon preached at City Road Chapel, March 5th, 1891.

it occurs to those to say who look at Wesley's goodness and greatness from other standpoints than those which are furnished by Wesleyanism. I feel, at all events, that it is as natural for me to act in this view as I suppose it may be for you to expect it of me. Leaving, therefore, others, to whom it more properly falls, to estimate the influence which Wesley has exerted in the world, and to pronounce the due panegyric on his life and work, I propose only to note one or two impressions and lessons which I think we may all lay to heart, especially in times like ours. I take the text as embodying this admonition, that men whom God has eminently blessed to us should be studied both in their teaching and in the manner of their life and work. Whatever their limits or their imperfections, it is likely that we shall find in this way suggestions as to following and serving Christ, which we cannot afford to want.

Wesley was the leading spirit in a great work of awakening. That awakening has been propagating its effects ever since. It proved to be God's way of redeeming the battle, in days when the battle went sore against truth and life both. It proved to be decisive in its influence on the whole religious history of England and America, not to speak now of influences in other fields. And if others shared with Wesley the honour of beginning this work of God, yet it was as controlled, organised and sent on its way by Wesley that the movement became decisive, and made its great mark upon the religious history of the world. To him, under God, we mainly trace it that new thoughts, new aims, new hopes arose every-

where among the Churches, coming as spring after winter, with life and with hope.

It is natural to ask what it was in Wesley that led on to so great a success. For while we own the Divine grace which prepared him for his service and crowned his efforts, yet we suppose that God fitted the agent to the work. So far as one can see, stress might be laid on two undoubted facts—first, that Wesley had native power to move his fellows, and secondly, that he was sagacious in affairs. Influence in those two lines is conspicuous throughout his life; but I do not think that in those quarters we shall find the eminence which made his work so exceptional in its extent and permanence. We are nearer to the true secret when we dwell on his singleness of purpose and of aim.

Wesley knew what he wanted. And in a remarkable degree it may be said of him, that he wanted nothing else but that. God had so prepared and disposed this man, that his eye rested steadily and always on the one thing. It was not taken off either by seductions, or by assaults, or by perplexities, or by the mere number and variety of objects appealing to him. He saw these things, but he saw them always in relation to his one object, which fixed and drew him. Now, "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Because he gazed so steadily on the one object of attainment, his view of it became clear; also the way to it revealed itself; the manner in which his own powers, and the resources at his disposal, could be put in play, with a view to reach it, became plain. The whole situation

fell in its place before him, and the way in which it could be influenced revealed itself. Wesley knew what he wanted. He had not a very quiet life, but he had in a wonderful degree the wisdom of a "quiet eye." He might be occupied with interminable activities, journeys to make, sermons to preach, books to write, business arrangements to plan and execute, people to talk to—reasonable and unreasonable—mobs might howl him down and pelt him, magistrates might bully him, Calvinists (like the present preacher) might rave at him; but all through there was a vision from which John Wesley's eye could not be turned away. It was not a vision of heaven, but, on the contrary, emphatically of the earth. It was a vision of English men and women—predominantly, not exclusively, of the lower classes—loving and serving God. Neither was it at all a fancy picture. He knew exactly what it meant out of his own experience. When was he disobedient to that vision? It was this steady eye that enabled him to clear his way through influences that might have swayed him, and entanglements that might have fettered him and marred his work.

It is a small thing to say of John Wesley, that his eye was not caught by money, or by ease, or by reputation; that no dread of hostility or of slander seemed to distract his attention or preoccupy his mind. But the same thing may be said of a matter that has been debated, and may seem to be debatable. Was not Wesley animated and drawn by love of power? Now to that I feel no great difficulty in replying. Every man who is working with his powers

at full stretch must be conscious of them, more or less. And every man who is enabled to put forth exceptional powers must desire to have a field for them. Wesley did so in his own case. But it seems to me that Wesley is totally misunderstood, unless you realise that with him the governing question was, how his powers could be best expended to bring to pass, under God's blessing, the result on which his heart was set. In a given line and way of working, Wesley saw a road to his end, and his experience showed him how remarkable the results might be. His decision was that his powers should be expended on that line, and that he would not be turned away from it. Neither would he allow himself to expend much strength on negotiating and disputing about it. If other Christians did not like it, they could go and make a road for themselves. Now Wesley may have been right or wrong in coming to these conclusions as to his way of working, and certainly only a very strong and capable man could have justified them in the result. But whether right or wrong, he was not seeking power; he was settling the economy of his life—how it and the powers of it could be best spent to gain the end on which his heart was set. Very likely some love of power did cling to his exercise of it. Most men like what they can successfully achieve.

When I speak of the singleness of Wesley's eye, I ought to observe that this does not necessarily imply narrowness. One may remark in him an openness to take into his own life, and recommend to others, a great variety of forms of well-doing and of Christian

activity. But one can also see that in his own case they all receive definite limits; the space allotted to them is determined by the main end to which his life was given. I am inclined to recognise this same controlling influence in connection with his controversial writing. Wesley judged it needful for him to engage in controversial writing in order to avert errors, and to keep his main movement on right lines. Personally I am not with him in all his contentions; and I do not know that anybody is concerned to maintain that he escaped all the temptations which beset controversialists. But controversy could not absorb him. He shut it up vigorously as soon as he judged it had done its work, and went on with his main business. He went on with it, very little ruffled, with little sign of having lost his breath or lost his temper.

I have dwelt on Wesley's singleness of purpose. It is not quite saying the same thing when I go on to speak of his unsparing devotion. It is possible to have a clear and steady eye for a great object, and yet through some lassitude or inertia to fail to respond to its attraction. But in Wesley one seems to see a devotedness that spares no effort and loses no opportunity. As his great object and the conditions of attaining it grew clear to him, he seemed to put himself in play, and those whom he could influence, to press on to it through every opening that was given. What a fine courage there was in the way he faced his great problem! As its greatness loomed out upon him, he set himself the more to subdue it to his Master's will. The common fault is that we

see our problem well enough, but we falter and flinch. All that Wesley was, and all that he had, was thrown into his battle with a serene, intense persistency that never seemed to flag. Doubtless he owed much to his bodily and mental health, and to the cheerful elasticity of spirit which so wonderfully characterised him. But those are qualities far from being always or necessarily consecrated to high aims or to self-denying life. We must here own the working of the faith which subdues kingdoms and stops the mouths of lions. As we follow him through his life, really, the question rises, How could a man come nearer to forsaking all that he had than Wesley did? And he did it, not as one pondering and moralising over so great an effort. He did it cheerfully, in the way of business, as it were, making investments for his Master. If we too could better learn this lesson of forsaking all, should not we too find life becoming significant and victorious? Should not *our* world also begin to move?

We recognise these as dispositions and influences under which Wesley became so singularly serviceable towards the end he lived for. This brings us to the question, what that end was. Many phrases could be used. It was, let us say, to bring God into the lives of men and women; to awaken, sustain and animate within them the blessed consciousness of knowing, loving and serving God. At a time when Christianity for multitudes had become a dead form, and when those for whom it was more than a form were perplexed and could not find their hands, this man was sent on to take order that Christianity by

the grace of God should become real all over the country. This is a description in terms that are pretty general and wide, and the generality may be vindicated from the circumstance that Wesley himself sometimes liked to speak of true religion in the most general terms. But if we do so, we must take care that we do not miss what was essential to the work before us.

God was to be known ; but He was to be known as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has drawn near in Christ to pardon and to save the undeserving and the sinful. And human hearts were to be awakened ; but it was to be an awakening to the wonder of redemption, and an experience of God's holy mercy, making salvation welcome and real to the awakening heart.

There are two things here. The first is the supernatural grace of the incarnation and the atonement. There are those who strive, as much as may be, to reduce Christianity to a sublime ethic. It appears to them that this is the safest ground on which to put its claims. They call it, in fact, the Christianity of Christ. I shall have something to say presently as to John Wesley's relation to the ethical aspect of things. And for myself—and you probably—I may say that every fresh illustration of the depth and height of the Christian conception of duty, goodness, sacrifice, is good service done to a great cause, and so far should be gladly accepted. But then the very meaning of Christianity is that behind all that there is the astonishing love of God coming into the very heart of our need and shame, in the gift and in the

sacrifice of His Son. That, too, is the source of the ethical peculiarity and splendour of Christianity, as it is the source of the gift of the Spirit, who translates Christian ethics into Christian character. Now, if that is renounced or eliminated, you will not maintain Christianity. You will find in the end that you are unconsciously letting go the Christian religion. Moreover, after a brief glow of interest and impression, you will find that you have lost the power to move and bow the souls of men.

I am not saying this by way of invidious attack upon those who feel themselves called—at present, for instance—to dwell emphatically and much on duty and on character. I should hold that to be very unjust. They may have very good reasons for the course they take. And John Wesley himself has said very sharp things about the worthlessness of mere traditional harping on the doctrinal outlines of the scheme of grace. But no man can rightly appreciate Wesley's work, who does not apprehend the strength it drew from the intense conviction that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto us our trespasses. Wesley and his work simply vanish if you suppose him withheld from going forth as one who says, "Behold, we declare unto you glad tidings."

That is one point. The other point here to be noticed is, the necessity for men and women individually to be brought into this blessedness, which in Christ is set before us, and to become partakers of pardon and of life—the necessity, in short, of conversion. It is very true that the longer one lives and

learns, the less one is inclined to lay down rules for God as to the way in which He brings men to Himself, and the steps by which He does it; or as to the measure of light and the form of thought and feeling under which His children may be holding communion with Him. Thank God, all our thoughts about this are nothing to the various and unsearchable grace of His ways. But yet we must be born again; there is such a thing as becoming conscious of the call of Christ as something for ourselves; there is such a thing as submitting to the righteousness of God; there is such a thing as a contrite heart being persuaded of the lovingkindness of the Lord; there is such a thing as receiving power to become a son of God. And Wesley's work challenged men upon the point whether Christ was in them. It held up actual pardon and power to serve God as benefits to be sought and found. Frank and unfettered as Wesley might be in recognising true godliness in forms far removed from those of his own ministration, surely his whole ministry drew its inspiration from that experience at a quarter to nine on a May evening in 1738, when he became conscious of the meaning of Christianity, of the love of God in Christ, as a possession and inheritance for himself.

Perhaps there are reasons for dealing with many congregations in our day circumspectly rather than roughly. Perhaps it is right to keep before our minds the possibility that some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel may have been planted early in young hearts, though it is not yet conspicuous, and needs fostering rather than more radical treatment.

Perhaps it is well to consider that, under the complex conditions of human souls, some may be more hopefully approached, more persuasively dealt with, by stealing in upon them with now this and now that of the various aspects of Christian life and service, suffusing their lives with influences that may gain them—that, one may hope, are gaining them by degrees. Perhaps so. But yet is not this true of many gospel hearers in our congregations, that they never have discovered with any application to themselves what Jesus Christ is for? It is all vague, uncertain, unpractical, unreal. And often they themselves feel, and we shall help them best when we feel, that they simply need to be converted.

As to the conception of conversion, the working idea of it which obtained among the early Methodists, and which guided much of their activity, I shall only say this, that we must have working conceptions to guide practice, and at the same time we must remember that these are commonly provisional and rough. Usually every extensive work of conversion or awakening has proceeded on some conception of conversion kept in view as that which was to be consciously realised; and this has been, generally, such a conception that when it is stated and defined, it is too narrow and imperfect to cover all cases, and yet is near enough to verify itself in many. In different religious movements these ruling ideas have varied a little; and so the type and style of experience to which the good Spirit of God has condescended to adjust His working has varied also. On the other hand, no way of defining conversion that man can

propose or enforce will exclude the possibility of imitative and deceptive experiences.

This experience of conversion may be held liable to a certain weakness and danger. A very vital element of it is a revelation, or apprehension, of a wonderful kindness to myself, out of which blessedness, if it is vividly apprehended, there comes naturally, and most legitimately, a sense of great gladness. It may be said, then, that at this point self can rise fatally into ascendency ; the sentiment of immense gain for me—deliverance, security and personal elevation for me—may usurp a most undue place ; self-complacency, self-congratulation, self-adulation, may break out in a great stream ; and the very process which was supposed to carry us towards God, and to dispose us to duty, may take a turn which supplants both in a great degree. It is in view of this that some critics of the evangelical administration of Christianity have spoken with contempt of the anxiety of people about saving their souls—as if it were only a religious form of self-seeking.

This is not the place to argue out the question. What I have at present to say is this, that no evangelical man could be less liable to the charge of concentrating attention exclusively on safety, on privilege, on the passive or receiving side of things, than Wesley was. One does not see that this was at any time even a danger or temptation to him. He was in the first place a man of an intensely ethical turn ; duty appealed to him with great constitutional force. When he began to think seriously of Christianity, he conceived a high ideal of a Christian's

character and attainments, and spent years in trying to realise it. Then when he found peace and liberty in Christ, the very feature of the new experience which stood out to his own mind was that it included power to overcome sin and to serve God. No doubt his conception of practical Christianity changed at that time,—but only in the sense of being deepened, widened and glorified. Instead of mere conscientious endeavour to conform himself to an ideal of devout life, there came the great inspiration of the love of God shed abroad in the heart through the Holy Ghost given to him. But that only sent him on his way with a new conception of the magnificence of his calling, and a new assurance of success. Every method he had proved before, as adapted to promote practice, service, diligence, came into play at once in the new career, with a new freedom and power. And accordingly his work of awakening aimed at rousing men to own the claims of holiness—that is to say, of consecration to God, and devoted service of men. He wanted people awakened and converted; but part of the meaning of that in his mind was that they should be set against sin, emancipated from the world, and free and strong in practical well-doing. He wanted Christians that should believe in these things, aim at these things, and attain them. And there are two features of his ministry which impress an outsider as regards their relation to this great and good ambition.

First, there was the method of organising and training the fruits of the ministry, by assembling the awakened into classes. No doubt this came in at

first as an expedient, wisely struck out in connection with the early conditions of Methodist itinerancy, which precluded continuous pastoral care. But it remained afterwards, as a permanent expression of the thought that Christians, whose hearts are in their profession, may be expected to join together to watch and help one another under approved leadership, in the endeavour to prove and to fulfil the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Whether this was and is the best way of providing for the objects, I do not know. Many of us know about the work of the Methodist class chiefly through the example of one *Daniel Quorm*; and if he is an average specimen of Wesleyan class-leaders, there remains little room for discussion. What I have to own is, that this Wesleyan way contrasts with the great absence in most of our Churches of any *regulated* way of providing for the same end. And though pastoral care and Christian friendship do, of course, come largely in to meet the necessity, yet often there is among us serious want of helpful companionship and counsel in early and critical stages of the life of awakened persons. At all events, most of our Churches cannot but remark here in Wesley's system, a striking practical tribute to the truth that the business of Christians is to take pains and combine their efforts to be Christians indeed.

The other feature to which I referred is nothing else than the Wesleyan doctrine of attainable perfection in holiness. Here, too, I am not to engage in discussion. It is well known that some of us conceive that matter somewhat differently. But I refer to it

for the purpose of laying emphasis on this, that in the mind of Wesley, and of those who followed him, that doctrine stood connected with the noble desire to stir Christians to aim at the fulness of Christ. For this reason he desired to clear out of their way whatever seemed to him likely to weaken the sense of obligation, whatever might intercept the influence of the Master's call to follow Him.

For the rest, Wesley's conception of Christian holiness was not narrow, and it was abundantly practical. It anticipated also a great deal that is put abroad to-day as newly discovered. For there is hardly a form of benevolence to men's bodies or souls, and hardly a line of action on the manifold problem of human sin and misery, that is not somewhere exemplified among the activities of that remarkable life—exemplified, and then commended and inculcated.

Well, it is not for me to say how far the Methodists have been enabled to keep up to the standard set for them by their great teacher. But I daresay that in your churches, as in ours, there is some room, not a little room, for progress; some ground, not a little, for lamenting our shortcoming and compromise in the field of practical Christianity. At least, however, it lies to you to take a forward and conspicuous place in rousing the Church afresh to this great interest. It is part of the work which John Wesley left to you. And this seems to be a present-day business. People are prepared to be interested in it. Ours is a time in which we find people realising fragments of Christianity with extraordinary vividness. And some parts of the teaching of Christ as

to the sacrifices His followers should make, and the work they should do, have been flashed into men's minds with startling effect. The question is stirring, Are we doing justice—how are we to do justice to the teaching of Christ? We have to learn this that we may teach it.

Religious awakening and movement come from vivid apprehensions of the mind of God, in some aspect of it, flashing in on the Church and on the world, so as to possess men with a sense—unfelt before—of the reality and majesty of spiritual things. Perhaps the next great awakening may come, not in the wake of what our fathers called a law work—an intensifying of the witness of conscience—but by a strange and vivid sense of what Christ meant His followers to be, of what men are called to receive from Christ. That may be felt to be real, wonderful, credible, and near. If so, what an awakening that will be for the Church as well as for the world!

So far I have spoken of master principles of Wesley's activity. As to the means by which he worked out his object in detail, I will make one remark. They seem to me to consecrate this principle—viz., the right of common sense to regulate Church methods in dealing with the exigencies presented by God's providence. Churches, dealing with sacred interests, and, as they trust, under some degree of Divine guidance, are apt to be very inflexible in their methods. What was right before must be right now; and what has been sacred till this moment it is sacrilege to alter. Now Wesley sets no example of flightiness, of sudden, inconsiderate change. He was conservative enough

to have a good deal of inward difficulty about the changes he made ; and what he did adopt after consideration, he adhered to with a fine tenacious consistency. But his visible conservatism only throws up into clearer prominence the dominant sagacity of the man. One expedient after another is considered, adopted, worked out, simply on the ground that it was the way by which, in fact, the necessary work could be done ; so it was with open-air preaching, classes, lay-preachers, and all the rest of it. If Wesley had been a mere ecclesiastic, occupied with the play of the machinery, it might have been otherwise. But here again we feel what he had his eye upon—it was that vision of saved and holy men and women to be reached across the cruelly adverse circumstances of the time. Now, it is a great principle that if you want to go anywhere you must take the road to it that lies open. Really that is so, unwilling as we of the Churches have been to believe it. And there is nothing in the revealed will of Christ intended to hinder us, while we administer His gospel for the ends of His glorious kingdom, from making use of those adaptations which have the simple consecration of common sense.

That seems a fair inference from Wesley's practice ; and I think the Churches need to lay it to heart. We need greater flexibility, and more of wise, considerate, yet courageous inventiveness. We are too slow in getting out of the ruts. I speak of what I know in the regions familiar to me, confessing my own share in it. I am not acquainted enough—to my own loss it is, I am sure—with the inner working

of Wesleyanism to know how it is with you. But I should be surprised to learn that with you, as well as with us, the surprising principle did not hold, in some degree, that the innovations of one age become the traditional fetters of the next, and that the fact that our fathers looked at things with their own eyes, comes to be taken as binding us never to look at them with ours.

But in speaking of the detail of Wesley's work, the explanation of its daily strength, I must be allowed, in closing, to go back on the point with which I began. That which was the secret of his strength in dealing with his enterprise as one immense whole, was the secret of it also in its daily and detailed successes. I am thinking now of that without which all the rest would have been nothing—Wesley's success in getting into living contact with souls as God's messenger, and his kindling a fire that went on burning where his personal influence could not reach. Here we all own the wise and loving grace of the Spirit of God. But let us mark this quality in His agent —the sheer honesty and thoroughness of Wesley's life. Long before he found peace and liberty in Christ, these qualities are already apparent. And when Wesley had been enlightened and set free, they received a new consecration and a new energy. It is not necessary to adopt all the judgments which Wesley made with reference to his own duty, as necessarily binding on others. But the decision, downrightness, resolute consistency that appear in his conduct about money, in his systematic self-denial, in his redeeming of time, in his almost incredible

diligence,—the unselfish consecration with which he gave himself utterly to the one end,—all this backed his preaching with a moral force, informed it with a cogency and reality which made it the proper instrument of the great result. It is not only that the people knew his devotedness, though they did know it, and bowed to it; but the man himself embodied it as an inspiration and a force. When he spoke of the claims of God, he spoke what was for ever echoing through his own life. Such men have full right and power to speak. Whatever may be true of possible effects from strong words spoken by spiritually weak men, or even from the good words of bad men, there is given to the words of a man whose life in its details has been steadily consecrated and devoted, a force all their own. No thought in connection with Wesley's life has impressed my own mind more than this.

We that are ministers cannot afford to lose this lesson. It is not difficult to believe of very many of us that we are sincere men, fairly diligent, intelligent, and earnest in seeking to do service to the Saviour, in whom we have trusted, and to the flocks over which He has set us. But what if, at successive stages—beginning early and repeating the process often—what if, when openings and calls came to us to embrace a loftier standard, to pitch higher and more worthily the key of service, to take the harder and the nobler view of what a minister may dare and do for Christ—what if we have slidden—alas! how easily—along the lower path, transacted with our own conscience, indulged ourselves—always, no doubt, in respectable and seemly ways—and set narrow limits

to sacrifice, to endeavour, to Christian ambition? I cannot refrain from expressing my fear that some of us older ministers—I do not say all, for I do not think so—but some of us—have greatly lost and thrown away our lives; because, though we have spoken strong words and forcible thoughts, and done it sincerely, meaning all we said, yet we failed to back them with a straightforward, unsparing devotedness of life, answerable to the words we spoke. I am not thinking, of course, of a paraded devotedness, exhibited to catch the eye of others; but of that personal affirmation of the truth we hold in continuous deeds of self-forgetting practice, which should have lent its silent force to all our dealings with the souls of men. When we look at this aspect of Wesley's life, we seem to hear a voice saying to us, if it is not too late—and saying to younger men for whom it is not yet too late: "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

It is time to bring this to an end. We join with you in thanking God for the life and work of this great, true, courageous and fruitful Englishman, this noble servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. We gladly own how well it is that in this memorable instance you should consider one that had the rule over you, that has spoken to you the word of the Lord, that you may follow his faith, remembering the end of his conversation. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in him, we shall rejoice to know that you go forth in God's strength more than ever to do. At the same time, we remember that this was God's special gift in the man we commemorate, that

he was enabled to bring to the difficulties and the dangers of his day a fresh eye, and a new impulse of faith and hope, and a creative instinct in grappling with facts. Therefore we will pray that among you, and also in all our Churches, there may rise up men who in this highest, truest sense reproduce the spirit and the work of John Wesley.

# JERUSALEM, THE MOTHER OF US ALL.

By the Rev. Canon Knox-Little.*

"Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."—Gal. iv. 26.

BY an old tradition of the English Church this Sunday is called "Mothering Sunday." I suppose the solemn and severe ideas of Lent which, after all, live amongst us, although the more ascetic and determined expressions of those ideas have quite necessarily and naturally passed away—although it be quite true that, in consequence of climate, in consequence of time, in consequence of the change of circumstance, Lent is not quite to all of us what once Lent was to the Christian Church, yet there still remains on the minds of the Christian Church the serious thought of those who think that their Prayer-Book is something more than a mere book of antiquarian research, who really believe that it has a guiding power, there still remains the thought that Lent has a solemn and severe and tremendous teaching; that, if it does nothing else, if it does not lay down strict lines of exact discipline, if it does

* A sermon preached at the Chapel Royal, Savoy, on Sunday morning, March 8th, 1891.

not lay down certain statements of an exact amount of ascetic fasting, it yet reminds us that to be good men and true men discipline is necessary for the Christian life. And when we come to a Sunday with that old English name of "Mothering Sunday," we are reminded—are we not?—that all discipline and all severity, that all self-conquest and all self-government, that all that implies putting the hand strongly and sternly upon the rein, is not a mere bit of absurd and pretentious ecclesiasticism, but that it does lead us to that which the wise man says is the truth, that "discipline has the care of love," that it does lead us at last to rest.

My brothers and sisters, if I have the great privilege, through him who ministers to you here, of being allowed to speak to you just this once and no more, can I do better, on a day that the old English Church calls "Mothering Sunday," than to remind you of some thoughts of encouragement?—how, if indeed your realise the dignity and the greatness of discipline, you may remember that it leads to your rest. For, after all, is it not quite true of every human being amongst us, that we do feel the stress and strain of daily life? Is it not true, at once of the preacher and those who are preached to, at once of the worker and those who are supposed to have leisure, that the world in our time is a very busy world, and what we want, and what we long for, if we are to go down to the depth of hearts, and if we are to say the straight and honest thing, is something like rest? And if I can say one word to encourage and remind you that there remaineth, really and

truly, and not in sentiment and imagination, and not in sentimentality,—that there remaineth a rest for those who love what is right and good, then there is a message from Mothering Sunday that may help you, my brothers and sisters—that is all I want—that may help you to bear the toils of your pilgrimage and to do your duty.

Now, St. Paul, I submit, had some thought like that upon his mind when he wrote the great words of the text. Of course I do not deny for a moment that St. Paul had also a very serious ecclesiastical and theological argument in his brain. He had got two great lines of comparison, and he was comparing one with the other; but about that I have nothing to say to-day. Deeper down than those lines of comparison was the one great thought, the governing thought, the thought that was lying deep in the big strong heart of that strong great man, the thought that, after all, his theological teaching, and all his ecclesiastical struggle, and all his theological argument, must lead—if it led to anything worth the consideration of human beings—must lead to the rest of the human being in soul and heart and mind and everything. That great thought governed all; and with that great thought before him, he took a sort of image, he took a sort of picture, he took something that he had himself seen and known and felt and loved. He named what to him was a great name,—he named Jerusalem. "Jerusalem," he said, "the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all."

Well, now, first, I think that we may well remember

to-day that, when St. Paul said such words as these, if he spoke of the city of Jerusalem he spoke of a *fact* which had very special characteristics. There is no doubt that the great city of Jerusalem has been, and in fact is, a fact that attracts the interest of thoughtful men. To the pious Jew, of course, it was a fact that spoke of a certain amount of real, absolute natural beauty. There lay the city. I remember one night some Englishmen riding quite suddenly round the city, and entering it by a gate they had not expected, from circumstances over which they had no control, and coming, under the full moon, in full sight of the city, even under Turkish rule, and seeing not the pinnacles of the Temple, but the shining minarets, all that represents a false and degraded religion,—I remember those men coming suddenly in sight of the city in the moonlight and reining up their horses; and one of them—a very good man, a very holy man, a very strong man—at the first sight of Jerusalem burst into tears; and then afterwards, when he conquered himself, he said, "It is like one's first communion, it is like for the first time taking the sacrament." Under the soft moonlight it might be the Temple, it might have all the magnificence of the palace of Zion, it might be all that one has read of since one was a child in the nursery. Here it is, in its strange and splendid position, wonderfully beautiful. Hemmed in at least on two sides by a great valley, governed—at least it was in St. Paul's days—on the other sides by great fortifications, it represented extraordinary beauty, a beauty of a great city with a platform of its own,

with hills running round it, not so high as to forbid human effort, not so low as to keep down human aspiration, but high enough and low enough to call human minds to high thoughts about so great a thing as that city. And when a pious Jew—and if ever there was a pious Jew, with a great big heart, it was St. Paul—named Jerusalem, he named a city of extraordinary beauty and extraordinary situation.

And then, dear friends, we do not waste our time if we remember this: when St. Paul named Jerusalem he named something that represented a very great and a very magnificent *tradition*. I submit that there are two thoughts that ought to govern men's minds with very great power whenever men's minds are lifted to the highest things. The one is a national joy, and the other a religious enthusiasm. No doubt it has become the fashion in modern days to be so cosmopolitan that you are called by names which I will not name in this pulpit if you have a great enthusiasm for national life. But, none the less, after all, national life means the expression of the highest and best thoughts of a great race in one direction as God may guide it, and no man that is ever worth the name of man but has felt his pulse beat quicker and his heart fly faster when he has thought of the great things that his nation has done before him, or may do perhaps when he is gone. But there is something even higher than national joy—there is religious enthusiasm. To have a real enthusiasm for lifting men up to higher thoughts, to feel that you may enable them to love and think of the very best things, that you may be a strength and support to them in

their great struggle and trial, to live not for what is base or bad or low or degrading, but what may last beyond the grave,—to think of that on a large scale, to think that that may be represented by a great Church, to think that goodness and truth and duty may have a corporate existence—surely that is great! And there was a time—it requires an effort of imagination, I grant it, to think of it—there was a time when national joy and religious enthusiasm went together, and that was the joy of a pious Jew. Alas! alas! in our times we have come to the days when we have to think of national life as one thing and religious enthusiasm as another, when we have to remember that national life means a whole system, very often of chicanery and trickery and political pantomime, and God knows what—very often a great deal that is good and great and strong and real; when we have to make up our minds, for better or for worse, that the State is one thing and the Church is another—so much the worse for humanity. But in the time when St. Paul lived—at least, in the time of the early pious Jews whose traditions he represented—Jerusalem meant something that spoke of national joy and religious enthusiasm joined together. Is it any wonder that he spoke of it with a very great, a tremendous delight?

And then remember this. Jerusalem meant for St. Paul, as he spoke of it as a fact, not only a beautiful and a wonderful place, not only the representative of national and religious enthusiasm and joy, but it also meant something most unusual. It meant a place which had *associations* about it that changed life.

Dear friends, perhaps you will allow me to remind you here that not so very long ago in London there was one sweet voice coming from one sweet mind—the sweetest voice, the clearest mind that I personally have ever known: a voice that used to say to me, a mind that used to express to me, one thought that I would like to express to you to-day. That mind used to feel, and that voice used to express, "Don't forget, whatever you are doing in mortal life, that things are not measured by their appearances, but that association goes three-fourths of the way in governing life." Dr. Liddon—the power of whose voice, the sweetness and clearness and perfection of whose mind, I hope London, which I always think hardly understood him, may yet feel, now that they want him—used constantly to be expressing that thought in private conversation. "There are places," he used to say, "that are powerful by association, there are forces which seem small in themselves, but if you take their vital power because of all the forces of vitality around them, you find how they tell upon your own life." That was a favourite thought of his, pressed home to his friends in private conversation, and, I doubt not,—though I never had the chance of listening to him,—pressed home to great congregations in St. Paul's. Now that thought, often brought home to me in private conversation by that great and astonishing man, reminds me of what St. Paul really must have meant by his first thought about Jerusalem. A place unusual, very small, very very tiny compared with modern thoughts, but, oh, with what association! I suppose you and I have gone through the streets

of London, my brothers and sisters, without any very great palpitation of heart, or any very strong feeling, excepting endurance or suffering or duty; but I suppose there have been moments when we have stood by the seaside, when we have stood on the crag, when we have walked waist-deep in the heather, when we have gathered flowers in the garden, when we have gone into the woods swept by the winter wind, when we have plucked some little plant growing up in the early spring-time, when we have listened to the surging waves of the surging sea—there has been nothing about us that has moved mankind at large, but we have felt like the great English poet felt when he opened the book and found his daisy, we have felt that in that world, in that surging sea, in that rising flower, in that blowing breeze, in that gust across the cliff, there has been a memory, there has been the thought of the one little hand that was dearer than all, there has been a recollection of the child that we loved like our own soul—now separated from us by seas and continents. There has been, in fact, the power of association, and that one strong thing that ever moved a human heart,—there has been love surrounding a human object, and that object did not depend for its magnificence upon its physical size, but depended upon its power of drawing out of the heart the great forces that belong to the heart, and what Liddon used to say to me long ago comes true: "Depend upon it, dear friend, it is not the size of things that does the work, it is the force of love within the thing." Jerusalem!—Jerusalem to St. Paul and to the pious Jew meant something that

represented the awful love of eternity, the power of national feeling and religious life. St. Paul spoke of a fact.

My brothers and sisters, St. Paul certainly spoke of a fact; but I want to commend to your intelligence this thought,—he spoke also of a *symbol*, a symbol which the Apostle felt as much as you and I can feel; and yet remember you and I can feel it as much as the Apostle felt. Jerusalem, as St. Paul spoke of it—Jerusalem as the Bible speaks—reminded him, reminds us, of the Christian Church in her struggle. For, mark, there was one thing about Jerusalem as the Apostle thought of it,—beautiful, strange, associated with great ideas,—she suffered—suffered first from this invasion and then from that; there was one thing about her when the Apostle wrote that marked her as miserable,—*she was not free.* Now, Jerusalem is the great representative of the Christian Church, and the Christian Church is the great association of souls bound in Jesus Christ, living for eternity, living above the world, feeding on supernatural grace, looking at eternal beauty, raised by high associations, struggling with difficulty. Mark, if you and I are to learn the lesson from Jerusalem to-day, we have to remember that we are citizens of that Church; and what is the consequence? My brothers, we belong to a city, we English Churchmen, extremely beautiful. Certainly there is a greatness about that part of the Catholic Church to which you and I belong, which we would be most treacherous to forget, a greatness that touches national life, a greatness that leaves us free to say our prayers in our own dear language,

a greatness that enables us to speak the truth and do our duty, and go our way and suffer our suffering. Certainly there is a greatness and beauty about our Jerusalem that we ought not to forget, and I do not think that any Englishman ought to forget that, amongst the great gifts of the heritage that he has got from his national life, there is none greater than being a member of the English Church. True sacraments, a true priesthood, the Word of God, prayer in his own vernacular, and yet that freedom and sweet air that comes from honesty and truth and duty,—that we love, and I hope that we shall always love, as English people. And yet, dear friends, let us pause for a moment,—and oh! whatever we do, let us face the fact, let us remember that our Jerusalem is not quite free. I may repeat myself to you this morning, and say a great conviction of my soul: there is a corrupt tendency in every heart,—I appeal to your hearts: is it not true?—there is a corrupt tendency in every heart that tends to fix that heart upon some object of sense, it tends to make that object something instead of God, and it reacts upon the source from which it comes, and it blocks the way to God. Multiply that by a hundred thousand million souls, and you find a hundred thousand million men and women with their corrupt tendency, with the object of life put before them instead of God, with the reactionary force of that upon themselves, and then you not only find a large multitude who are not living for God, dear brothers and sisters, you find more, I submit, you find a great tradition you find it handed on from age to age, a temper

a tone, an atmosphere, of taking things as if they were God, and putting them in place of God. It is handed on from man to man, from father to child, it grows like the London fog, it grows like the smoke from the chimneys, and you and I, when we wake in the morning,—small blame to us!—we find it hard to breathe, and we find our eyes are sore, and we ask ourselves why it is so hard to be good and dutiful: and the answer of the Bible is plain—the world as conceived by St. John; and I hold it unfair to say that that belongs to high life, although high-born people are especially its victims; I hold it untrue to say that that belongs to politicians or commercial people, although commercial people and politicians are in special temptation; I hold it is false for theologians to pretend that the world is only in the West End drawing-room, or only in the political pantomime of the House of Commons, or only in the commercial pantomime of the City. No, dear friends that atmosphere is in us all—in the clergyman, in the layman, in the poor person, in the cottage, everywhere and always—the great tradition of evil. But what does it do? It holds our Jerusalem, it makes the clergyman a place-hunter instead of speaking the truth, it makes the layman a worldling and neglectful of his church, it makes the young girl look for some good *parti* in life instead of marrying the man she loves, it makes the father and mother do "the proper thing" for their child instead of thinking of their souls, it makes you, it makes me, play a pantomime and neglect our duty; and, when you come to public life, it makes those who govern and guide the Church

not guide it by principle or govern it by Divine revelation, but think about what will tell and what will pay. Ah! my friends, it is a real power, and the Apostle felt it, and you and I feel it every day, and we are hypocrites and pretenders if we say we do not feel it; for we feel it in our private prayers, and we feel it in our public duties, and we feel it as we take account of our consciences. There is a power that is opposing Jerusalem, like Nebuchadnezzar; the Church of God is face to face with the world, and the world is putting her in shackles, and we have to live in the Church, and our eternity depends upon whether rightly, and truly, and sincerely, and honestly, and simply, and straightforwardly we are quite determined, come what may, we shall think of God's principles and not of the world's teaching.

We shall remember not only that the symbol of Jerusalem is the Church in her slavery, but we shall lift our eyes above the darkness, and our lungs above the fog, and we shall remember the last truth which comes to us to-day—that the Apostle not only spoke of a fact or of a symbol, he spoke a *prophecy*, and a prophecy which will come. Dear friends, that is my message of consolation to you. Take heart of grace, and do not be frightened: it will come. Jerusalem which is above is not like the fact bound by Egypt and Nebuchadnezzar, not like the symbol bound by the world—Jerusalem which is above is *free*, which is the mother of us all; for after all, dear friends, it is not sentimentality, it is not imagination, it is not a mere dream. After all, your consciences

respond to it; after all, your intelligences answer to it; after all, your hearts rise up to it; after all, you are born for better things than this passing pantomime; after all, if you and I have the strength of principle, and the warmth of heart, and the sturdiness of consistency, and the quietness of duty, and the sweetness of temper, and the force of prayer,—after all, there is a Jerusalem above which is free, and she is the mother of us all.

Free! Why free? I make no doubt that when I speak to English people, and I use the word free, I touch a nerve that vibrates swiftly; for any honest English heart understands the meaning of liberty. You are bound by error, you and I—we make mistakes; you are bound by sense, you and I—we are tempted by the body; you are bound by the world, you and I—we are attracted or persecuted or ridiculed. The world has taken good care to do her work in the Church; she attracts the Church into playing the part of a worldling, she ridicules the Church lest you should think religion too serious, and then she persecutes the Church, as they persecuted in the Inquisition, as Calvin, among the Nonconformists, burnt Servetus. The world goes everywhere,—yes, do not let us forget it, do not let us pretend to stand outside other people, do not let us get on stilts and think we are above everybody else. Not a bit of it. We are subjected to the great temptation, to the temptation not to be true, not to be loving, not to go straight.

Now think, there comes the time, my brothers and sisters,—and this is our great consolation,—there

comes the time, so the Apostle says, when Jerusalem which is above shall be free. First, I would remind you,—and perhaps it will help you in the struggles of your difficulty and your darkness which you and I have to go through,—it will be free by truth. There will come the time when truth will be quite clear, when there will be no mistake, when there will be no misunderstanding. Perhaps you may find a difficulty, not about truth, but about love: there will come a time in the Church when there will be no more hardness or cruelty or scorn, but there will be real affection, there will be love. Jerusalem which is above will be free by truth, and she will be free by love.

And then, if in one word I am to borrow the words of a great Apostle, there will come the time—and by faith we have to cling to it—when "there will be no night there." "I beheld," said the Apostle who lay on the breast of Jesus, "the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming out of heaven from God." "I beheld her," he said; and he describes her position, her place, and her gates, but he ends it up by saying, "There will be no night there,"—there will be no misunderstanding, there will be no want of clear light, there will be no temptation to sensual sin, there will be no darkness in conscience, there will be no failure of real affection. Take courage; if you are trying to live by principle, if you are trying to do your duty, if you are trying to say your prayers, if you are trying to take the sacraments, take courage, and remember a moment is coming, and it is coming quickly, when there will be no night there. I know it is exceedingly difficult to persuade people of that,

because the world has eaten into the Church; but this I say, in closing, "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." If you are a victim of the world, if you are a victim of lust, if you are a victim of opinion, you are bound and tied. There are two ways out of it: the one—there may be those before me who find that way, but I do not think there are many—the one is *Innocence*. There are those who are innocent from the great offence. If there be one that I speak to who is innocent from the great offence, "Keep innocency, and do the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last." But the other way, my brother and sister, is nearest to us,—*Penitence*. Most of us have done wrong, and there is one way out of the wrongdoing, and that is sorrow, and sorrow is the path of freedom. If you have gone wrong, if you have left the Jerusalem above, come back by sorrow to the mother that bore you. Don't be a fool, and think that the world with its cynical scorn and its foolish laugh can put aside eternal truth. Ye are the children of the Church of Jesus if, having done wrong, ye are sorry. Come back; ye belong to the Jerusalem above, "which is the mother of us all."

And then this last thought. I may fail to persuade you of the danger and the difficulty of the Church on earth, I may fail to persuade you of the principles by which that Church has to work for the Church in heaven; but there is one thing I am quite certain of, and I want you to think of it as I close to-day. Those who desire to do right, those who desire to serve God, remember that right and truth

and duty are freedom ; remember that all persuasions of sin and worldliness are persuasions to slavery ; remember that here and now you and I may be attracted by what is wrong ; but attraction is not conviction, and wrongdoing is ever leading to the bond of slavery that will bind us down. Remember —oh, remember !—that whatever comes, whatever goes, certainly you will die.

"Sunset, and even-star,
And one clear call for me,
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea ;

"But such a tide as, moving, seems asleep,
Too full for wave or foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep,
Turn again home.

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark,
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

"For though from out this bourne of time and sense
The tide may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar."

My brothers and sisters, the central figure in the New Jerusalem is Jesus Christ—"the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and all sin and all sorrow may be laid at His feet, and may be placed in His heart ; and those who are honest and thorough, and seek His life and His assistance, they, and they only, will find freedom from the world and the flesh and the devil, which brings us at last eternal rest.

Thank you for bearing with me while I have put before you my view of the New Jerusalem for the Church of God in eternity, for which you and I are preparing. Now, the Jerusalem which is above us is free. My brother, my sister, if we live according to her principles, she is free, and she is the mother of us all.

# THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS.

By the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Lincoln.*

"Oh, come and mourn with me awhile;
Oh, come ye to the Saviour's side;
Oh, come, together let us mourn:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified."

THERE is a certain amount of truth in the objection which some people feel to keeping Good Friday at all, or indeed keeping any day specially for religion. They think we ought to keep every day in God's presence and as devoted to Him, and that it is rather a bondage to tie ourselves to this day or that day. And of course it is perfectly true in the highest thought that we can reach that to God there is no particular day, because God, being eternal, is before and through and beyond all time. God is the everlasting Now, which was, and is, and is to come; not by change and succession, but by unity of existence, the everlasting, eternal Now. And inasmuch as we look forward, please God, to a capacity to live for ever in heaven, there is a certain amount

* Addresses delivered on Good Friday, March 27th, 1891, at the Three Hours' Service in Gainsborough Parish Church.

of reasonableness in the thought that we also might be above time and place.

And yet a little more reflection will show us that such a line of thought is a rash impatience, and, untrue to our present condition. At present we have to go through the discipline of space and time and to be content to do one thing at one time and another at another, and so please God to get on till at last we may enjoy the endless unchangeable presence with Him in heaven. I mention that because some people feel a sort of difficulty. "Why should you have these special days in the Church—Good Friday, and so on?" Well, I say that there is a certain amount of truth in the objection, as there very often is in people's objections. But a little more reflection will show you that it is reasonable. So we come to this, that we have two calendars, as it were, to keep. There is the domestic calendar, which few people would think it right to neglect. There are few people who do not remember the birthdays in the family circle—the birthday of the father and mother, brothers and sisters. Surely it is no true advance in spirituality to forget one's mother's birthday or one's father's birthday, one's husband's birthday or one's wife's birthday, or one's child's birthday! It is not an advance, but it is a forgetfulness. And so with particular days in one's life—your own birthday, the day of your christening, your confirmation, your first communion, your wedding-day, the day on which you laid one so dearly beloved in the grave—surely these days you do not think it a progress in spirituality to begin to forget; but rather, the more unselfish you are, the more dis-

entangled from the cares, and unhampered by the din and the confusion and the noise of life, you dwell upon these days, gladly thankful, with refreshment. And so there is the domestic calendar; and many a man who is too busy to go to church every day will go to church on the anniversary of his wedding-day, or perhaps on the anniversary of the day when his wife left him for paradise. He will keep these days, and rightly.

Now, if it is right and reasonable that we should have our domestic calendar and keep these sort of private family holy days, is it not simply natural and right that we should widen out our heart and obey the Church's command and keep those days which in the wider family of Christianity the Church bids us keep? Do not think that a man would feel he was advancing in Christianity if he forgot it was Christmas morning. What! forget the day on which the Saviour was born for you? And if we forget Christmas Day, when the Saviour was born, are we not now just natural, so to say, and reasonable and right in coming aside quietly and saying, "This is the day which we must keep as quietly as we can, the day on which my Saviour died on the cross for me"? If I would not like to forget the day on which my child died, my brother, my sister, my father, my mother, surely I would not forget without as much of a recognition as I am capable of the day on which the Saviour died for me and all mankind.

Then I say that it is reasonable, and that is the first thing which all sensible people should desire to settle; that this is not a fanatical thing or an unreal thing,

but a quite reasonable thing, that we being as we are in this condition of time should keep the double calendar—the domestic calendar and the wider calendar of the Church. And so to-day the Church bids us keep as best we can Good Friday, the day on which the Saviour died for us. And if people only brought it at all home to themselves, they would do it; if they only could give a little thought to it, they would do it.

Well, dear friends, I am well aware that it is not natural; and, again, you may raise the objection, It is not usual to bring people in anything like a hurried or confused way into the presence of death, into the death chamber. It is not usual: it is generally only a few, the nearest relatives, the oldest companions and friends, that are asked to come in for a little while. And generally young people and children—we think it will be too much for them, too awful; and, therefore, while we would bring them in just for father's last blessing or mother's last word, yet still generally with children and young people we say, "Well, when you are stronger, then you must take the griefs of life upon your shoulders, but at present this may be too much for you; run and play." And so, often, when father or mother may be dying the children are told to run and play. And yet we know how wonderful the power of true child life is, and how often with a singular wistful kind of look they will wait and they will watch, and their love enables them to endure. And so to-day, dear friends, if there are any young people, young children, amongst you here, and to all of you, let me say, if you

find that it is too long to stay for the whole three hours, do not be afraid to go. Go quietly, please, during the singing of the hymns. If you cannot stay all the while, well, we are glad to have seen you for a little bit to come and give this tribute, to pay your tribute, to show your love and devotion to the Saviour on this day commemorating His death. And very likely there may be some people who are not very well, who are not very strong, and certainly some young people—do not stay any longer than you feel able. Look up at the Cross, and ask to be forgiven, and then go and be ready to take your share in the cross as it comes.

We, dear friends, who are older, we must try, God helping us, to stay as long as we are able. It is apparently but a very small spot that our sight is directed towards. We look up upon the Cross. It was a small thing, not much ; but let me recommend to you this line of thought : the area of the battlefield is always out of proportion with the results of the victory. Some of the greatest battles that have been fought were fought upon a few acres of land, but the victory gave peace and honour to a whole nation. And so it is here. We look up to-day just on the battlefield, the Son of God and all the powers of evil gathered against Him for one final conflict upon the Cross. But the result of it !—the freedom of the world, death and Satan conquered. And so you will find for yourselves, dear friends, that day may run along with you in your minds with our lives. Over and over again in our lives the victory of our whole being will depend upon our winning the battle with

some one besetting sin. Over and over again it is one particular besetting sin. There is the battle: by God's grace win it, and your whole nature and life is free. The area of the battlefield is ever out of proportion with the results of the victory.

And so I say to-day, when we come and kneel again in faith beneath the Cross and look up, we see that which is small in area but worldwide in its results, and reaching through eternity. So, then, I say, for those of us who by God's grace may be able it is indeed a great occasion, the day which the Church has put aside and said, "This is the way in which we can only do it, we creatures of time and space, by putting apart one special time, and thus for one awful moment stand beneath the Cross of Christ, where He died for the sins of the world, and for me—for me." And so there will be two lines of thought for you, dear friends, which you may find in the collect for the Second Sunday after Easter, where it runs: "Almighty God, who hast given Thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life,"—there are two lines of thought for you to-day: the sacrifice for sin, and the example of godly life,—"give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that His inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life." There are two profitable lines of thought then—that of the inestimable sacrifice of the death of Christ for us, and the holy example which we must try to follow. Let us kneel and think of it.

## "Father, Forgive Them; for They Know not What They Do."

See the perfect quietness, calmness and order there is in the Saviour's mind, now entering into this great and last battle on the battlefield of the Cross, contending against the enemy in his last attempt. No excitement, no confusion, no anger; but quietness, calmness and forgiveness—"Father, forgive them." And then look at His unselfishness in this, no thought of Himself, but for them. No crying out of His pain, nothing of that, of the insult and the shame and the wrong, no complaining at all; but His anxiety is for those who are doing all this, lest they should hurt themselves: "Father, forgive them,"—an utterly unselfish prayer. We know how hard it is ourselves if we are in any sort of suffering; I do not mean suffering when other people treat us wrong, but when we are suffering from sickness, chronic sickness, pain, and we do not feel well. How easily we fall into selfishness, the selfishness of the invalid, wanting to be the centre of attention, the first to be thought of in the house and the family; all the arrangements must be made for that one. We gladly will do it, but the person that is sick and suffering should strive to look and see here at this most acute suffering the suffering on the Cross, and the absolute forgetfulness of self,—no thought of self at all. "Father, forgive them." How much more bravely, how much more successfully, should we pass through many of our ailments and difficulties and tribulations, if we could forget our-

selves, and in the middle of trouble, instead of turning to self and how much we have been injured and wronged, and how hard it is to bear it, if we could be thinking of other people all the while. So the Saviour here sets us that example of complete unselfishness: "Father, forgive them."

And then the reason why that He gives—"They know not what they do!" Ah! there, my friends, there the Saviour unveils for you and for me one of the mysterious characteristics of sin. When we sin we know not all that we do. "They know not what they do." It is an exposure here for our sakes that we should take warning that when we sin we do not know what the whole effects of it are going to be. In the beginning of life, when children are idle and careless, and will not attend and learn, they do not see how they are harming their future, how they will limit the happiness which God will give them, how they will one day bitterly regret that they had not made a better use of the early days for learning. It is a common, common thing, we know not what we do when we do wrong. And so it is in all kinds of sin. We begin, and we think there won't be much harm come from it. It is just a little beginning, something that we do not think quite right. At last we begin to know that it was certainly not right, yet we did not see the full harm, we did not feel the bondage of the habit which we were beginning to form, we did not see what its effect would be in the injury of our after life, the shortening of our memory, the shaking of our nerve, the dimming of our eye, the making us go back from the place in life in which

God intended us to be. There is many a man who has had to take a second, or third, or fourth rank in life, because he fell into sin in early days, and he did not know how great the sin would be. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

It is, indeed, a revelation to us of the deadly nature of sin, that it is so much worse in the end than we think it is going to be in the beginning. It looks such a trifling little thing, it looks as if it could bring us no harm, quite light like a flake of snow. What can be the harm in a flake of snow? and yet flake upon flake will baffle the power of this nineteenth-century science, and stop the carriages and the horses, and the trains, and all our commercial traffic. Only flake upon flake, a little thing upon a little thing: then you see the result of it. And so it is with sin; we know not what we do. And this word from the Cross may indeed save many and many a young person entering life, if they would but turn to it. Stop while there is time. Stop at the beginning, or the end may lead you to something that you never thought you would do. "Now I am going to suffer for what I never thought to do," were the words of a notorious murderer who suffered on the scaffold not many years ago. When he looked back on his dark career, he never thought it would end like that; but he went on step by step until he got accustomed to the darkness, then the deeds were done. So it is for us, dear friends, standing at the Cross, to look and see how much we need of the forgiveness which this word contains. Think, for a moment, how many our sins of omission have been, how many things there

are we have left undone which we ought to have done, how many prayers unsaid, how many kind deeds not done, how many hours wasted, how many thoughts that have been improperly employed—so many things we do not know; we cannot reckon up the number of the things we have left undone. We want this prayer for ourselves. Directly our mind at all comes back to the real condition of our life, it is certainly what we want, the prayer of the Saviour for ourselves. We cannot reckon up the sum of the debt of the things we have left undone.

And then, the things that we have done wrong, the injury that we may have caused to others, who can reckon it? When a child throws a pebble into a pond, you know how the circle is very small at first, and then it widens and widens till it reaches the rim. And so it is, I fear, very often with the sins of our youth. We may have suggested words or deeds or thoughts which may have gone widening, widening, widening; and who can tell how far the injury has reached which he may have been guilty of in days when he did not intend to do it almost? We cannot tell how much injury we may have done to others. Our bad example, not going to church, not going to the Holy Communion, not saying our prayers, not reading our Bibles, being ashamed of God, not speaking up for God,—we cannot tell how many people that we do not know may have been encouraged in evil by the evil that we have done. Directly we begin to think of the things that we have omitted to do that we ought to have done, and when we think of the injury that we in our lives may have

caused to others, surely we need this prayer. And then, for ourselves, what might we have been if we had always done what we ought to have done, and not left undone the things we ought to have done, nor done things which we ought not to have done! How much clearer our view of spiritual things might be, how much more free we might be from the fear of man, how much stronger we might be in the love of God, how much bolder, braver, brighter, how much better witnesses, examples for Christianity, we might have been! O God, forgive us!

Dear friends, I think if it was only for this word we might well indeed all of us, whatever our lives may have been, the best of us, we might all be glad to come aside to-day, and place ourselves beneath the Cross, and look up and say, "O blessed Jesus, Thou who hast known me from the first moment when I was born, Thou who didst give me my life, and Thou who hast known all that I have left undone that I ought to have done, and all the things that I have done which I ought not to have done, Thou who knowest all the injury that I may have done to others, oh, stop the injury to them, give them repentance for any wrong thing into which I may have led them, cleanse them by the power of Thy precious blood; and then, O blessed Jesus, let me too come within the power of this prayer. Forgive me what I have done wrong." Dear friends, I think we need this prayer to save us from a kind of bewilderment and distraction and despair when we really think about our own lives, when we put ourselves into God's hands and ask Him to forgive the evil we have wrought in others and

pardon what we have done wrong, and ask Him in the power of His precious blood to unmake all that we have made of ourselves that is contrary to His will, and remake us again in the power of His risen and ascended life, and pardon us and give us a place in this prayer of the Cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

## "To-day shalt Thou be with Me in Paradise."

The first word was to those who were still His enemies. They were crucifying Him. This second word comes in true order, to one who had been His enemy, but now has repented and turned to Him. We know that it was part of the terrible shame of the Cross that the Saviour was led out through the streets as one of three malefactors. We know how hard it is sometimes when people say things about us that are not true; how we resent it, when we are what we call misunderstood and misrepresented, and our motives are misconstrued. And here the Saviour is led through the streets as a public criminal with two other malefactors. The crowd of people could make no difference. There they went to Calvary, all through the streets, and He had to die as an untrue man, as a man that richly deserved and got what he ought to have, his own deserts. And now the two are one on either side; and even when they were there, St. Matthew tells us that first both of them reviled Him. He had no comfort. They both reviled Him. But at last, St. Luke tells us—it may be the power of

the prayer that He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"; it may be some wonderful expression of innocence and gentleness and love in the Saviour's face, hanging close to him, apart from the workings of his own heart: but we cannot tell—this we know, that, though he began by reviling the Saviour with his brother malefactor, at last the penitent thief turned, and said to Him, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." It was a splendidly phrased prayer. What I have just been saying would lead you to think he would say, "O God, forget me; do not remember me, do not call to mind all the moments of my life I have wasted and misspent." Not so. The penitent thief would not have anything left out of the Saviour's memory. He would have it all remembered, and, being remembered, pardoned in the remembrance. "Remember me," do not forget me, "when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Then the Saviour's answer, at once: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

Dear friends, if what I said just now must lead us all to the very edge of despair, thinking of how much untold injury we may have done to others and ourselves, here is a thought. The Saviour here shows us one whose life had been wrong up to the very last moment. He is dying on the cross as a malefactor, and yet when he turns to the Saviour, the Saviour pardons and forgives, forgives freely: more, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise,"—a total pardon after all that life of violence, it may have been injury to many others as well as wrong in itself.

All that is pardoned and put aside. The Saviour made manifest in this how welcome the penitent is even at the last hour.

And yet, dear friends, we must not deceive ourselves here. We must be careful to see how much suffering the penitent thief endured, what faith he showed us, what courage. There is nothing here to make people careless in sin, or to put off their repentance needlessly till the last moment. Look at the penalty he paid, the penalty of the law. He was crucified. Both were crucified, the penitent as well as the impenitent thief. And then look how thoroughly he made confession of his sin. He distinctly says that he was receiving the due reward of what he had done. He did not wish to be passed off as a person that was being wrongly punished and wrongly crucified. He made an act of faith before the people round about him, spoke out, and rebuked his companion. There was most true courage in confessing his own wrongness in his past life. He reproved his companion and tried to bring him back, tried to do what he could to make amends, compensation, for what his life had been. And so he is pardoned and forgiven. After his pardon, it has always seemed to me also wonderful what he is allowed to suffer. After the Saviour had pardoned him, and given him the assurance "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise,"—after that he is allowed to hang still upon the cross. All that darkness he had to go through. The penitent thief was living on, and the darkness came on round about him. The Saviour seemed to leave him; and most awful of all, he had to see his own Saviour die and to hear

Him utter His cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" I can hardly imagine a greater trial to go through than to have been hanging by the Saviour, and after he had put his complete trust in Him, then to see that Saviour die, die in agony upon the cross close by him. Yet, still he persevered, and yet still further. Then you remember that towards the close how the soldiers came round and broke the legs first of one and then of the other. I should suppose it must have been an additional trial of his faith. "Does the Saviour really care for me? Am I to be in paradise this evening, when He lets me be so roughly treated, when I am to be treated just like my brother malefactor, my legs to be broken?" Yet so it was. Dear friends, I think there is a warning here for any who might presume upon forgiveness as though it mattered little whether we repented soon or left it till the last moment.

But there is what I take it may perhaps be more helpful to-day, dear friends. There is surely an intended comfort here for all truly penitent people who find in the days of their true penitence that they have to suffer, that they have to endure a good deal, many a suffering, many a disappointment, many a trial, to be roughly handled by other people, to go through times of darkness, depression, despondency. There are troubles which, when they beset a person, are apt to make him think, "Can my repentance be true? can I really be forgiven? can I be accepted by God?" And here is a most merciful picture given to us in this history of the penitent thief, of one whose pardon we are assured of. His life we know

was most wrong up to the very end, but his pardon we know was most complete. The Saviour with His own lips told him that that very day he should be in paradise. And yet between the pardon and his death how he seemed to have been left by the Saviour to suffer. So, it may be, dear friends, with some of us. It may be, perhaps, that this is the meaning of the mysterious word which the Saviour spoke to Ananias when he was sent, you know, to baptize Saul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles. When Ananias was told to go and baptize Saul, he as it were objected to the Saviour that He was going to be too kind. He said, "Oh, I have heard a great deal about this man"; and then he proceeds to show how much harm Saul had done. What does the Saviour say? "Go on, go on; baptize him. I will look after all that; I will show him what things he shall suffer for My name's sake." It has often seemed to me that that may mean that we are not tender enough, gentle enough, to administer the wonderful discipline which the Saviour knows the soul of His saint will require. And therefore, while sometimes penitent sinners seem to be let off too cheap in the eyes of the world, the Saviour looks after the inner discipline of the heart, and there is trouble, and the way of penitence is a way of sorrow and difficulty and trial, which the eye of the world cannot see. But the Saviour knows it, and the Saviour will administer the discipline and the trouble just as we are able to bear it,—not too much, yet enough, so that the soul shall be perfected and be ready to be with the Saviour in paradise. So the great Apostle Paul

had a hard and suffering, a trying, and often, apparently, an abandoned life. He was imprisoned, he was scourged, he was beaten, he was shipwrecked, and yet all the while he was the chosen vessel to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. So here this penitent thief, to whom the Saviour promised, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise," had to pass through a period of wonderful suffering and apparently of neglect.

Let it be to us an encouragement if we sometimes are apt to think, "Can I be accepted of God, can I be pardoned of God? if I really were so, should I be as I am?" It is the constant cry of God's servants, "Why am I thus? I want to have manifested the power of God." Yet it is there. So for a moment longer look, and see how wonderful the comfort is which the Saviour gives us here with regard to those that pass out of this world. Immediately, "to-day," this very day, "shalt thou be with Me in paradise." It implies the existence of the soul after death. It implies the consciousness of the soul after death. For there could be no meaning in saying "to-day shalt thou be with Me," if the soul was to be asleep. It means that he was to be there in His conscious companionship, enjoying the conscious presence of the Saviour the very day that he died: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Brethren, when we see our friends go out of this world, it may give us restfulness, courage and hope to think of this word of the Saviour, and then to believe, "Ah, this very day, though gone from me, thou art consciously with Him in paradise." They are in rest and peace and ever increasing hope and joy. Brethren, it is worth wait-

ing and struggling for, though we may when we look back on our lives be tempted to be in despair because we know not the amount of our sins, though what we know is sufficient to condemn us; but here we have in this word to the penitent thief, "Never mind all that past; thou hast turned away from what was wrong, thou hast looked up to Me, thou hast made thine own confession of belief in Me, thou hast done what thou couldst to make amends after seeing that thine own life was wrong, and that thou hast been rightly punished, and, therefore, this very day thou shalt be with Me with the souls in paradise, there to rest, and then with Me for ever in glory in heaven."

## "Woman, Behold Thy Son; . . . Son, Behold Thy Mother."

We follow here the order of our Lord's words. They were begun in all that quietness and absolute unselfishness, not speaking of Himself, but taking the outer circle as it were first, and beginning with those who were His enemies—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"; then, turning to one who had been up to the last moment His enemy and then had turned, the penitent thief, and saying to the penitent malefactor, the man upon the gallows, as we should say, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Dear friends, when we in our modern newspapers read of an execution being settled for such and such a day, let those of us who can in the interval pray for the poor person who is to suffer the penalty of the law. One lesson from the penitent thief

should be to have faith in people's unapparent capabilities. We do not know what works in the hearts of men. They may look rough and hard, and they may perhaps be tenderer than our own, and be in paradise before we are, if ever we by God's mercy get there. It should teach us not to judge hardly other people. We know not what God may be doing with their souls. The man on the gallows, to that man the Saviour says, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Let us pray for those on whom we hear the sentence of the law is passed. It may be a soul will be saved, though their bodies will suffer.

Then the Saviour turns, as you know, now, but only now, not before. His eye, as we may reasonably suppose, rests upon His mother, and then He looks to her and says, "Woman, behold thy son," and then to St. John, "Behold thy mother." The Blessed Virgin must have wondered, except she had such perfect trust, that He should have spoken to one and another and not a word to herself. But that word came now. And it has often seemed to me to be a most precious harmony of the first and the fifth commandments: the first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and have none other god but Him"; and the fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and mother." And sometimes it is not easy to see how to carry out these two commandments, to give ourselves to God and to attend to our family duties. Here ~~I think~~ we have an example of the perfect solution of it. Look at the obedience which the Saviour's life sets before us, His own home life in the little village of Nazareth; it is surely wonderful.

If the Saviour, we should have fancied, was pleased to come down from heaven, He who was the constant theme of the adoration of the angels,—if He was pleased to give up the glory of heaven and come down to this world, He would come down in some majestic way into some of the greatest cities with a splendid retinue, with some of the magnificence of building, with some of the magnificence of an earthly court. Not so. The little out-of-the-way village of Nazareth, in a despised part of the corner of the country, Galilee, there He was pleased to live, obedient; we know how it was, He went and was subject unto His parents; there He lived. And look at His patience. Living on there in His home life till He is thirty years of age, and only three and a half years more to live in this world! Surely it is an example to us, who in these days are apt to get impatient of stopping at home. It would have been apparently a wasting of opportunities, a wasting of life. Why, did He not come to save the world? and is He going to stop at home in the little village of Nazareth, and work in the carpenter's shop at home with His mother for thirty years, and within three years and a half of His own death? Yes, because obedience and patience and the discharge of home duties are more precious really than mere energy and excitement, and all those natural kinds of expressions of the desire of winning our end with which we are apt to think we can only accomplish the work God gives us to do. Patience, obedience, discipline in home life!

There He lived a child at home, living there in all that marvellous moral surrounding, creating it

Himself and using it Himself, and teaching us, dear friends, to open our eyes to see what treasures are to be found in home life. Surely they lie on the surface when our eyes are at all opened—obedience, simplicity, humility and affection, love and purity. Where will you find such an opportunity for simplicity? We cannot impose upon our brothers and sisters. They known our real value. In the world we may pass for better quality than we really are. When we come home we are called by our Christian names again, and they know what we were and what we are. And where will you find the free exercise of love, where can you hold the hand with such purity, as you can in home life? Where is the heart to expand, and really exercise the functions God has given to it, as it can freely in home life? And so the Saviour lived at home at Nazareth, in the little shop working day by day for His mother, in no great way of business. We surely should have imagined, Is it possibly true that the Saviour, the Creator of the world, will put His hands to the instruments, to the tools of an artisan? will the Creator of the world do that? Now we shall see something! now we shall see something in the workman's shop! Now we shall see angels come down; something will be made by Him that will startle the ingenuity of the world! Not so. So far as we know, He took His part in making the ordinary implements that were required for the agriculture of the time—simple yokes for the oxen, goads for the oxen, the common wooden plough, such as would fetch nothing in the present advance of science. Such was His absolute obedience and humil-

ity, working in the little village shop, the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, working to support His mother.

Ah, and we know it is more than that. It is, I think, no assumption, it is the common tradition, to conclude that Joseph, His reputed father, was dead before He had been living many years. He lived with His parents, Joseph and Mary His mother, and Joseph died. When He comes before us, we do not meet with the name of Joseph any more, but Mary His mother comes. What follows, then? That He lived at home, in the little village home at Nazareth. And He knows what it is to bear the discipline of home life; and more than that, He knows the patience and the tenderness that is required to hold up the broken life of widowhood. A widow's life must be a broken life, and no affection from children can exactly supply the loss that she has sustained. And therefore there must always be a kind of disappointment in the affection which children render to the widowed mother. And the Saviour knew that. He lived with a widowed mother with a broken life, patiently, lovingly. Dear friends, do you not see what force there is in this life, living quietly,—its patience its obedience, its purity, its affection,—living there quietly in the little shop at Nazareth with His mother in her widowed life?

At times, you know, as when He was twelve years old, there was an indication of what was to come. He went to the temple and stayed in the temple; and then, when His father and His mother missed Him, and they came back and said, "Why have you dealt with us like this?" it was the first beginning,

and the Saviour had to make His parents sad. "Wist ye not," He said, "that I must be about My Father's business?" There was light from above coming in, there was something beyond, something more than the village life. There was the fifth commandment, but there was the first too. And yet He went back, and for eighteen years more He lived in a quiet and simple obedience with them. Dear parents, that was as it were just an outbreak of the higher Divine life in the life of Jesus. It is a most valuable subject for contemplation for all those to whom God gives the inestimable, mysterious gift of children. In the Epistle to the Colossians St. Paul gives a very wonderful warning, in the third chapter, twenty-first verse—"Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged." Now, in the usual way of the world people say, "You need not be afraid of discouraging children." Nay, nay, gently; they are eternal beings, they are to live for ever. You have got a force round about you that has in it the potentiality of a life beyond time. You do not know what your children may be called to do. Mind you do not discourage your children. To discourage, you know, is to take the heart out of a person; to encourage is to put heart into them. And is it not sometimes the children that have the lion-heart taken out of them? They would spring forward to a freer and nobler and braver life, if they were not sometimes discouraged, kept back, because their parents do not see it. Oh, dear friends, it is, I know, a most delicate, a most mysterious matter, and I have no right to interfere, having no actual experi-

ence; but still, speaking on this mysterious word, I cannot help mentioning these things to you. The Saviour when He was twelve years old just showed that there was higher life for Him even than the home life at Nazareth, yet still He went back. You may have in your children, perhaps, desires for higher life, a life more straight for God than may seem to be convenient for you, or may seem to be such as will be most in accordance with the comfort of your own home. Be at least very careful and very prayerful how you deal with it. The Saviour went back and lived till He was thirty with His mother in the home at Nazareth, and then He went forward, then He left His home, then He went out upon His Father's business, then He had nowhere to lay His head, no people definitely to look after Him. His mother followed Him sometimes, but He seemed almost as it were not to attend: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" When they were crowding about Him, and said, "Don't you know your mother and your brethren are standing without wanting to see you?" He said, "Who is My mother and My brethren? Whosoever will do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." There seemed to be a forgetfulness of home. People said He was mad and had a devil; and He would sit with anybody, with people of broken character, with people who were the very outcasts of society, as it were. The purity and the simplicity of the home at Nazareth seemed to have been cast behind Him, and He went on, not going back home again, living on, working His

Father's will. And then, when the great end came, all the seizing of Him and all the trial, yet He was still keeping as it were His mind away from the poor Virgin mother, and on the cross not speaking to her first or second,—then at last, when He had spoken for the pardon of others, He turned to her, "Woman, behold thy son; . . . son, behold thy mother";—surely, brethren, it was just one look of love and one word of love which reconciled and explained the difference between the thirty years and the three and a half. It is a harmony of the first and the fifth commandments. There had never been any forgetfulness of His mother. And now, if we may take it,—and I believe we ought to take it in its simplest and the plainest way,—what did the Saviour do? He made provision for His mother. He provided a home when He worked at Nazareth, for those thirty years He helped to support His mother, working in the home, in the village shop at Nazareth; and now He has not forgotten her, but he turns to one who had leaned upon His breast, who knew His mind, who had been His most intimate disciple, and He said, "There is provision for you," then turning to the disciple—"Son, behold your mother." Thus He made provision for His mother, provided so that she should not be left uncared for when He was gone.

Dear friends, this wonderful word seems to me to belong to every man who knows anything of family life. Is it not what has gone on always? Is there not with all of us a feeling, "Well, perhaps I had better stop at home, I had better give up this and give up that"? Many a man feels, "I wish I could

have more time for home, for my wife and children ; no, but I must press on, I must do my work in life." It may be the work, which some people are called to do, to go right away abroad, it may be to go like a missionary and to preach the gospel in a foreign land. And it seems that some people forget to have any feelings. Do not you care for your mother, father, brother, sister? And as it is in home life, so it is in public life: every man must give up much of his mere enjoyment. It is part of the burden of life, that every man has to balance as it were between the enjoyment and momentary comfort of his own home and family, and working out that work which God brought him into the world to do ; working out the work which, if he does, he will be able to do more for the comfort of his family than if he gives way to the momentary demands of pleasure.

I know that, in these days of rapid and hard work, there is a danger of men not giving enough time to their home. There is a danger that hard work will harden them, harden their feelings, harden their hearts too. It ought not to be so, it need not be so ; and here in the blessed Son's example we have, I venture to think, a perfect example of the harmony of the first and the fifth commandments. The discord we, more or less, in little degrees, are conscious of. We do not know how much time to give to our family, how much time to spend on our work. Here is the perfect example. The Saviour is at home quietly all those early years, in all that obedience, all that simplicity, all that purity of love ; then He is away on His life's work. Is His heart less tender? No. And

on the cross He turns thus to His mother and says, "There is provision. Woman, behold thy son; and, son, behold thy mother. Take care of her." Dear friends, let me ask you now every one just to kneel down and to think of this simple application of our Lord's work, and how far we are carrying out the fifth commandment and the first, doing our home duties and doing our Father's business.

## "My God, My God, why hast Thou Forsaken Me?"

Only now, in the order of the words, does the Saviour come to speak of Himself—such absolute self-forgetfulness and unselfishness: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"; "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise"; and then to His mother, "Behold thy son," and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother." And then only He comes to Himself. And, brethren, what a strange disappointment we shall say it is. When He does come to Himself, and speak of Himself, I think we should have imagined that it would have been some wonderful outburst of praise and glory, and confident, triumphant faith expressed by it. Yet it is quite the reverse, quite the reverse: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We should have thought that it would have been something like the chariots and horses of fire come down for Elijah, something that would have been a wonderful manifestation indeed. No; quite the contrary. He speaks of Himself as feeling forsaken.

Now, let us for a moment be clear as far as we can be as to what this does not mean. It cannot mean that there was any failure of trustfulness in God. God forbid. It cannot be that there was any feeling that the Father had left Him. The very words forbid it, where He says, "My God, My God." There is no separation between Himself and the Father—He is sure of that: "My God, My God." What can it mean, then? As far as we can tell, it must have been, dear friends, a wonderful instance of His love in allowing Himself to show us something of what the bitterness of sin will lead to, in the separation which it must bring between us and God. In this incommunicable anguish of the Sin-bearer, He felt Himself bearing the burden of the sins of the world and He would have us see what a shadow, what a darkness, what an awfulness sin does produce: "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" this darkness coming over Him because He had entered so closely into the position of the sinner. It may give us a warning of the awful despair that must come upon those who are actually separated from God. Then, again, it is a cry of pain; not of bodily pain, but of pain of the spirit, pain of heart. And it means this, that the Saviour was pleased to forego the comfort and the joy of the consciousness of the Father's presence for our sakes. Amongst the sufferings which He would undergo for us, one should be the foregoing of the comfort and of the joy of the brightness of the beatific vision. He would let that be veiled, and bear this cross for us.

This comes to a very practical truth which all, more

or less, have to undergo, and that is the experience of the loneliness of goodness in this world. It is more or less a lonely thing. Many and many people suffer from it, and not a few break down under it. Any kind of greatness is necessarily singular and alone, for it only becomes greatness in so far as it exceeds that which is around it. And so it is in spiritual and moral life, in goodness just as it is in other things. And if a person is called, and answers to the call, to live a higher life, more out of the world, more unworldly, with a higher love, again and again he has to bear the loneliness and the solitude which belongs to goodness in this life. Our Saviour had Himself said that all would forsake Him and fly, and so they did. People did not care about Him, they did not want Him ; He was too good for them. His very presence seemed to be a trouble rather than a comfort ; they wished to put Him away. He was a reproach to them. They put Him away at last, they put Him to death. But this was something more, this was a depth of loneliness which we never should have expected. He would, as it were, be bereft of the joy, of the consciousness of the presence of His Father "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Here, brethren, to not a few there may come a great ground of comfort. There are some spirits that are unable honestly to express themselves with much enthusiasm, with much brightness and joy in their religious life. And to such spirits from time to time it becomes a matter of anxiety,—Can my life be real? Can I really be in communion with God, being so constantly weighed down with this heaviness,

surrounded with this darkness, oppressed with this dulness? Can it be that I am in communion with God vitally? And here, I think, we may have a very straight and sure answer. Most assuredly the Saviour was in unbroken vital communion with God,—"My God, My God"; and yet there is this feeling of depression, this feeling of being left alone, not only by man, but in a mysterious way even by the Father Himself. Brethren, in these present days sometimes this takes a deeper form with us, and a trial comes not only of loneliness, but of strain, and of doubt in our belief. Here, again, I think, we may have comfort. It by no means follows because people are strained in their belief and have to suffer, that they will finally end as unbelievers. Many and many a man, and many a woman, has had to pass through an agonising time of doubt before they could know the enjoyment of restful, peaceful, happy, trustful belief in God. To many and many a man in these last days there has seemed to come a horrible darkness over him, a horrible fear lest he should lose all, and yet he has not. Not a few men, by any means, have been tempted at least with the passing thought that life was not worth living, and suicide would be a better way out of it; yet they have not, they have been brave to endure, and they have lived to come through it. And I believe, dear friends, the history of many and many a man who has been through that mental agony which is far worse than bodily pain—many and many a man who has been through that, will tell you that he has just been enabled to hold on doing what the Saviour did.

What was that? Praying, "My God, My God." Turn to God in the agony of the moment of darkness and of doubt, hold on and wait, and the truth of the sixty-second Psalm will come home to you: "My soul truly waiteth still upon God. . . . God spake once, and twice also have I heard the same: that power belongeth unto God." Ah! power, intellectual, spiritual, moral, as well as physical power; and He can make the mind which seems to be hopelessly perplexed, clear and restful. He can make the heart which seems to be as dry as a river-bed in summer flow again like the streams of the autumn. He can give us, any moment that He pleases, of the refreshment from the fountain of His own omnipotence. He can easily refresh our minds, make the cloud pass, give us the light of His countenance, and we shall be in peace. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Oh! not a few in these last days have felt the sympathy of this prayer; and out of my own little experience I am able to say, thanks be to God, that again and again this one and that one that had feared he was going to be a complete unbeliever has only been feeling the strain which more or less must come upon our finite faculties if we turn them to the contemplation of the infinite, and after a while he has returned back again to a childlike trustfulness, a childlike simplicity, accepting, surrendering and believing.

## "I Thirst."

This short word has one of the simplest and most practical meanings, and yet I believe, as coming from

our Lord's lips, it should be also, perhaps, one of the most far-reaching meanings of all. "I thirst." First of all it is to give us the assurance of the reality of our Lord's human nature, that He was very man as well as very God, and that being very man and in the body He would bear the sufferings which come upon us through our bodily nature, He would bear in the body as well as in the mind, not only in the mind but in the body, so as to be a true and real sympathiser with all those who know what bodily suffering is, weakness of body, pain that comes from sickness, all the desponding weariness that comes with old age, when people cannot do what they used to do, and become dependent on other people. And it is very trying at the beginning of old age to be so constantly dependent upon other people when we have been accustomed to do things for ourselves. But it is a part of the discipline which belongs to our weak nature here to be helped by other people, and the Saviour has given us one very simple, but very beautiful example of it. He bore His cross. Now, a mere natural heroic human nature would wish, if it did the thing at all, to do it for itself, to do it and to finish the thing without help at all, with heroic Stoic-like fortitude take the cross, carry the cross, suffer on the cross, and not say a word about it. The Saviour is more perfect in His human nature. He takes the cross, He bears the cross; but He allows another even to help Him in the carrying of the cross, and Simon of Cyrene, he carries the cross part of the way to Calvary.

Dear friends, when we sometimes get impatient

even with those who would help us, and save us trouble, and bear some suffering for us, when it rather touches our pride instead of bringing forth our gratitude, let us remember, if it humbles us a little bit to need the help of others, that the Saviour was pleased to accept the help of Simon of Cyrene in carrying His cross.

And so here in this word you might have thought, Well, if He has gone through so much, surely He will not care to show that He is in want of anything, He will not care to say, "I thirst." But He will, He will say "I thirst," because He will be absolutely true to what He was,—a dying man suffering the pain of thirst. And He would set us an example of not being afraid and ashamed to express our weariness when we are weary without any fault of ours. Sometimes, perhaps, I have thought our spiritual nature and our spiritual life would be more pure if we followed the Saviour's example. Sometimes people will persist in doing things which they really are not strong enough to do. People will insist on attending even religious services when they are too weak, too delicate, and had better stop at home. Sometimes people will persist even in the discipline of fasting, scriptural and true as it is, when they had better have something to eat. It is more humbling to admit that you cannot do it even though it is the right thing, than to do it and be untrue to your own nature and injure yourselves and disenable yourselves from doing what God would have you to do. We should sometimes do better by doing less, by being more human, admitting we are tired out, admitting we cannot attend to that service and

this. There is sometimes a kind of wrong in heroism, a kind of wrong in braving out, which is not true, not really noble and good, but only challenging of ourselves in rivalry against others. The Saviour with more perfect humility let Simon help him in bearing His cross. He said, "I thirst"; He was parched, and He said so. Dear friends, perhaps if we did know a little more of bodily suffering, our sympathy would be more pure and more real.

Nowadays, thank God, there is a great deal of philanthropy, a great deal of benevolent sympathy; and a person who is very benevolent and sympathetic is generally well spoken of. But do we always know the real meaning of the word sympathy? It means to suffer with people—to suffer with them. And I think, dear friends, we should perhaps be able to understand the sufferings of other people a little better if we really shared some of their sufferings. Those people who are in pain, we may give them a ticket or order for the hospital or for the infirmary; and it is quite a right and good thing to do, and benevolent, kind and sympathetic. But if you know what pain is yourself, you give the ticket to the others with an additional purity of intention and reality of oneness with them. If you knew what pain was, hour upon hour you would with greater reality of sympathy help those who are in pain. And if that is so, it must be the same with regard to poverty and to hunger. Perhaps those of us who every day have quite enough to eat are unable quite to sympathise with those who sometimes have not. We may give them some money to get food when we see them, and that is bene-

volent and right and sympathetic. But to be fully sympathetic we ought to know what the feelings of a man are who has not had enough to eat that day, what the feelings of a person really are who looks at his wife and children and does not see where the food for to-morrow is to come from. I say it is quite right to be benevolent and sympathetic in giving and in relieving the wants of others ; but I do not suppose we can quite enter into the sufferings of poverty and of sickness and of hunger unless we have been hungry and sick and poor ourselves. That is perhaps one reason why there is so much difficulty at the present day in understanding the true relation between the rich and the poor. With every desire to understand it and to do properly by our poor there is a large margin, an unknown kind of tract, which those who always have enough and a balance on their side are not able to enter into when they are talking of those who do not know whence the money is to come for the next day's meal.

Now, the Saviour knew what it was to be hungry and to be thirsty. He has done much, and it has been a substantial comfort to thousands and thousands of poor people when they have been receiving the sympathetic assistance of their wealthy neighbours to know that in the Saviour they have some one who can understand them even better, because He was poor and homeless, had not where to lay His head, that He was hungry as a hungry man, and thirsty as a man that wants something to drink. It was a reality of sympathy which he would go through in order to be sure of understanding the feelings of

those who would suffer. "Blessed is the man that provideth for the sick and needy"—so runs one of our versions; but there is a better rendering: "Blessed is the man that considereth the poor and needy," that understands, that tries to enter into the feelings of the poor and the needy, of the hungry and the sick. Blessed is the man that considers—not merely gives his alms, but the man who considers, enters into, understands as far as he can, the poor, those who are in want, and the needy, whether it be through sickness or in any other way.

Now, the Saviour has given us this perfect example of understanding by His own experience what it is to be in want,—"I thirst." Dear friends, it may perhaps at least make us careful and more tender when we are talking about the suffering and the poor and the needy,—it may make us more careful if we ask ourselves, Was I ever really hungry, really thirsty, not knowing whence to quench my thirst or stay my hunger? If not, am I sure that I can understand the feelings, the perplexity, the wounded self-respect which belongs to those people who in God's providence do not know whence to get their bread? "I thirst," the Saviour says. Let it make us tender and considerate if we would have for ourselves the blessing of the phrase "Blessed is the man that considereth the poor and needy."

Brethren, that very simple and practical exposition would be wrong if I were to leave it there. The Saviour meant more than that. When the Saviour was sitting in the middle of the day on the side of the well talking with the woman of Samaria, then

He said He was thirsty, and asked her to give Him something to drink. But surely the very position in which He was sitting leads us to think—and His conversation with the woman—what He really was thirsting for was the soul of that poor creature, who was one of an alien, as it were, religion, broken in her social position, such a one as most people would have turned their back upon. She was a Samaritan, of an impure, as it were, faith ; and she had had five husbands, and the man she was then living with was not her husband. The Saviour thirsted for her soul, to bring her to the knowledge of Himself, that she might be saved. And so the word of the Saviour, "I thirst," reaches farther than the mere desire for the quenching of the natural thirst, and it means what is expressed in the Psalm : "My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God : when shall I come to appear before the presence of God ?" There was a thirst for the souls of the people, a real desire to draw all men unto Himself. Now, we should ask ourselves, Have we that ? have we that desire to bring people who may be socially and theologically, as we should say, repulsive to us, not in accord with us, but with whom we might naturally dispute, and from whom we might recoil ? Have we that inner, spiritual thirst to bring all people round again so that they shall be in communion with God and in love one to another ? When we move amongst the numbers of people in our big towns, when we see them pour out of a factory, do we have a longing towards them ? Oh, that I could help you to draw nearer to them, that I could see you more loving one with another !

When we see them in our country villages working upon the land, do we long to lift up their hearts, and with all gentleness, yet with all power, constrain them to come nearer to God? Do we long, as it were, to get a greater consciousness of the spiritual life amongst us? Do we long to make the kingdom of God more of a reality amongst us? Do we long to see people making more of the Saviour and of Christianity, being children of God and members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven? Have we this thirst, this desire? Is it the thing we long for, so that it constantly comes up in our conversation, in our letters, in our intercourse with other people? Have we this great desire? do we thirst for it, to get rid of these unhappy divisions, to get away from all quarrel and dispute, to be of one mind, to love as brethren, to be like people going to their common home in heaven, children of one Father? Have we this burning brotherhood of love in us constantly? "I thirst."

Brethren, as a sort of test let me in a very simple way put this to you. What are the common natural conditions under which people do hunger? What do we say? Well, a person hungers when he is young and growing. Young people are hungry—they are young and they are growing. People who are in good work hunger and enjoy their food. The listless man out of work has not the relish for his dinner, that a man has who has earned it by a day's good work. He has earned it, he has worked for it with his strength, and it is his, and he thanks God for it and enjoys it. The man who is in strength and work

hungers and enjoys rightly. The man who is sick and ill does not care for his food. Bring him this and bring him that, his wife may do her best, but he does not seem to care, he has no appetite, it is failing, because he is sick and ill. Dear friends, I have sometimes thought that is not a very difficult parable for us to understand. Why do not we have this thirst for souls of people? why have not we this thirst for God? —"My soul is athirst for God"—is it not often because we are sick in the soul? There is some sin which makes the soul sick. It is like a disease in the body, and we have no proper hunger nor desire. We cannot hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed is the man, the Saviour says, blessed is the man, blessed is he with soul hunger and thirst after righteousness; he shall be filled.

But perhaps one reason why we have not the hunger and the thirst after righteousness, why we cannot take up this word of the Saviour and make it real to ourselves in a higher sense, is the same reason that prevents a man who is sick in his body from caring for his food. There is some sickness in the soul, some sin that has to be turned out before we can hunger and thirst after righteousness. Or, if it is not, dear friends, if it is not owing to actual and real, conscious sin, sin that we are conscious of, it may be that we fail in the other conditions. We are not, as it were, growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not working for God, not trying to help to push forward His kingdom. And so we are like a man out of work, listless, and with a poor appetite, if not as bad as the

man that is sick, who has none. We are like a man out of work, we have no energy, no proper pride about us, no proper secret, inward satisfaction that gives us a sort of nobility about our very bearing, and a look of peace, of force, and of power. It is thus, perhaps, because we are doing nothing for God, not really workers for God; so we have no appetite for the things of God, no real hunger and thirst after righteousness. Dear friends, this is simply a parable for yourselves. The Saviour says, "I thirst." Take it spiritually. Blessed is the man that hungers after righteousness. Do you? If not, why not? Is it that you are like the man that is sick, and so you have no appetite, through some sin? is it that you are not working for God, or not growing in grace? Ask Him.

## "It is Finished."

None but the Saviour, of all who ever wore human nature, could say that, at the end of life, "It is finished." All done, complete, nothing left undone that He ought to have done, nothing done which he ought not to have done, everything done that He had to do. Exactly at the right time, in the right place, in the right way, He did all things well. Oh, what a contrast with our lives! Oh, what a contrast with our lives! Any of you brethren who are getting to the ridge of life, and getting towards the end, as you look back can you say, "It is finished," everything complete? No, no; nothing complete. But with the Saviour everything was done completely: the home life at Nazareth absolutely perfectly done, no collision

between the first and the fifth commandment, His Father's business done utterly, His mother's love retained completely, everything in every direction absolutely complete. More than that, oh! more than that: "It is finished" must have meant far more than we can understand at all. Up to this point God had been leading the world ever since man fell after his creation, up to this God had been leading the world. In the fulness of time, the Son of God came forth and was born. Now He had died and offered up the full, perfect and complete sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Whatever there was in the bond of sin by which man was held, that bond is cancelled by the death of Christ upon the cross. Whatever there was of debt, that debt is paid; the debt is paid and the bond is broken; the snare is broken, we are delivered, and man is free. Free! The devil has tried his utmost, he has thought to wound the Lamb of God: in all his fury he came upon Him, but his jaw was broken, for there was the Rock of Ages there as well as the Lamb of God, very God as well as very man, and he had to return; he returned and failed, and he was broken, death and the devil vanquished, vanquished. "It is finished." Whatever there was of bondage, of debt, whatever there was of disease in man, now the perfect cure is provided—the Rock of Ages, there from the riven side shall flow the double stream of pardon which shall wash and cleanse me and make me pure. From the foot of the tree of the forbidden fruit flowed a polluted stream of sin and misery and death. Now from the tree of the Cross there shall flow the streams with the

correlative remedies, righteousness, happiness and life eternal. "It is finished." The world is redeemed. Man can come back again to God. God can take His child back again into His arms. God can say to the prodigal, "Come back again"; and He can go out to meet him, fall upon his neck, get ready the fatted calf and slay it, put the shoes on his feet, and the ring on his hand. Yes, the prodigal may come in now. "It is finished," man is redeemed.

Dear friends, that is why we call it Good Friday. That is why it is worth while coming here to-day, Good Friday. The Saviour offered up to-day the one full and perfect sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world, and therefore for mine. And we to-day in all humility can look up, if we accept it as our own. There is the precious blood, there the precious blood of the Lamb; a red line drawn across the debt of my sins cancels the bond. And all the hope we have as Christians, all the power we have through the sacraments of the Church, all this takes its origin, as it were, from the fountain that is opened now to-day on Calvary. "It is finished" because the bond of sin is broken, the debt of sin is paid, the disease of sin is remedied. "It is finished." The Saviour is to be buried, to rise, to ascend, to send forth the Holy Spirit, to give the means of grace. All this He knows now. This is all secure. "It is finished," the world is redeemed mankind is saved. He sees it all. "It is finished," all that was leading up to it in the heathen world and in the Jewish world, all of it culminates, and is finished.

Indeed, it is a marvellous thing; and yet contrast for a minute the outward appearance, just as it looked. What a collapse it must have seemed, just simply three malefactors upon the cross, as they seemed to be; just, as it were, the world triumphing, and there you have the King of the Jews—there He has got what He deserves. Nobody cares for Him. What a foolish end. Of course He has come to nothing, killed like the rest, crucified. And so the crowd went home. Ah! to look at it on the outward side, it looked like a dead failure. The Saviour saw the victory, and said, "It is finished." Dear friends, perhaps, sometimes when we read of, or know by our own experience, the loss of some one whom we think we can very ill spare, or whom the age and the Church can ill spare, we think when such a one is taken away, What will become of us? It seems to be a break-down, it seems to be a failure; and we talk of this man and this woman as seeming to have failed in their lives, and died before their time. Let us sometimes hesitate before we say that. We only see a very little bit of things. God sees it all; and what seems to be a failure on our part as far as we can see it, may be complete as far as God's purpose is concerned, and the man has done the work that God brought him into the world to do. It is far, far too mysterious a mechanism for us roughly to put our hands into, the mechanism by which God carries on the work of the world. God brings a man or a woman into the world just to make a little contribution, as it were, to life. They do their part, and then they leave. But again and again we cry out, and we say, Oh, what a failure

he was! No; he may have done all that he had to do. And when we sometimes see in the life of the Church or what not what seems to be a failure, and it seems to come to nothing—Ah, now that man is dead we shall never get on. So it seemed on the evening of the first Good Friday; but the Saviour said, "It is finished." And even in our own poor lives, when we see how much of confusion and incompleteness there is, and how little we have done that can be said to be finished, how we put our hands to this and put our hands to that, and it is all imperfect,—let us trust that we have just done what we have tried to do in obedience to the Saviour and in union with the Saviour. When He takes us away, that will do. "It is finished"; you have done what I would have you do, that will do. It may look like a collapse, but it is a victory, and you shall be crowned in the end.

Let me, then, before I finish this word, suggest to you, dear friends, what I venture to call the law of handing on. It is a mysterious law. We often, as we are getting towards the end of life, do not know what we have got to do, we cannot tell. We may have something to do for somebody, most important: to hand on some teaching, some example to our children, to our own country, to help to send a mission into another land. We have just got to do something before we die. We do not know. It is like as it was with Elijah. Elijah thought that his life had come to an end, and that he was good for nothing, and he begged to die. But Jehovah reproved him, and said that he was not to die yet, that he had work to do. He was to go and anoint Hazael king of Syria, and

Jehu king of Israel, and Elisha as his successor as prophet. Now observe: the great Elijah had nothing more to do himself, but what he had to do was to commission others. He had to hand on the word of the Lord to others who should work when he was gone. Just the same with David: in the end of David's life we see him gathering his court together, and he calls them round him, and he calls Solomon his son, and he tells him to be of good courage, and he hands to him the pattern of the temple, which he said the Lord had given to him. David was not to build the temple, David never saw the temple built. David said he had prepared with all his heart for the house of his God. He had done what he could, but he was not to build the temple; Solomon was to do that, but David was to hand on the pattern by which his son was to build.

Dear friends, think for yourselves what have you got to hand on, so that your life may be complete and finished. Look round in your own families, your children, your wife, your husband, your companions, your friends, the people who live in the same town with you, the members of the same church —what have you got to do? hand on something: the law of handing on. And then, it may be that though you will seem to die in a simple way, and it may seem to you after all only a collapse and a failure, it shall be with you as it was with Elijah—the chariots and the horses of fire were ready. And though he seemed to be a despondent man, an outcast of the powers of the world, and a failure as far as this world's appearances went, God was watching him, and God

accepted him, and He took him. Thus, to all outward appearance the death of the Saviour seemed to be a collapse and a failure, but the Saviour knew Himself it was a complete victory. The powers of this world could prevail nothing. "It is finished." Think for yourselves what you may yet have to do, so that that word in its degree may be yours.

## "Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit."

The first word the Saviour uttered began with "Father": "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The last word began, again, with "Father": "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Communion with God, unbroken of course, all through the life, and then to go up into the life and the joy of the glory which He used to have before the world was made! Brethren, for one moment only, for I must not keep you any longer, you may just arrest your attention on this fact, that the Saviour here uses again one of the words of Scripture—the thirty-first Psalm and the sixth verse: "Into Thy hands I commend My spirit." And certainly two of the other words out of the seven were also from the Scripture: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and "I thirst." Then, brethren, even at such a supreme moment, at the last agony on the Cross, when He was to speak the Seven Words, three at least—possibly "It is finished" is from the twenty-second Psalm—but three are words of Scripture. Take it home with you.

Let your Bible be your constant companion in order to keep you in communion with God. The Psalter seems to be, as we may say, the Saviour's very book of devotion. Let it be one result from our Good Friday, standing near the Cross, to make more use of our Bible. And let me from this point out how the Saviour has used it,—if I may say so, how He makes it especially His own. He adds the word "Father" to this text: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." He adds the word "Father." It is not in the Psalm; and so He would teach us, I believe, to use the Scriptures, taking the words of Scripture and bringing them home to ourselves, so that they should express our language towards God and God's message towards us.

"Into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Oh, what perfect peace, and what final courage! He has gently and quietly borne all up to the last moment, and then without the least excitement simply says, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

Let us go back, then, dear friends, to-day, after tarrying round the Cross this short time, in ourselves above all things thankful that thus there is pardon for my sins, that the Saviour has died for me. If He died for me and showed such love to me, I ought to forgive other people, I ought to be kind to other people, to forgive them, as God for Christ's sake has forgiven me; and I ought to look up to Him and give myself to Him now henceforth and for ever.

# THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

By the Rev. Principal J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

"For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh."—Hebrews xii. 18-25.

THE words to which I wish to address your attention are the latter half of this passage which I have read, from the 22nd verse, which I shall take leave to read again, somewhat altering the version: "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, a festive assembly, and to

* Preached at the opening of Wimbledon Presbyterian Church, April 10th, 1891.

the church of the firstborn, enrolled in heaven ; and to the Judge, the God of all ; and to the spirits of the just made perfect ; and to the mediator of a fresh covenant, Christ Jesus ; and to the blood of sprinkling, speaking of better things than Abel's. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh."

A Christian Jew, writing to Christian Jews, who stood in some danger of falling back to the religion they had abandoned, this writer is here, as every one sees, contrasting the two systems, the old and the new, the law and the gospel, with a view to show—which is indeed the thing he is showing all through his letter—that the step from Moses to Christ had been in every respect a step forward and upward ; that everything which they appeared to lose in forsaking Moses had been more than recovered in finding Christ.

In so far as the readers of this letter were Christians as well as Jews, the privileges they enjoyed were privileges of which you and I also enjoy. Similar temptations beset us likewise—temptations not now to forsake our faith for that of Moses, but to forsake it for less venerable and less Divine forms of belief, or to no belief, to forsake it perhaps for some secular advantage or the passing occupations of the hour It may prove, therefore, of use to us also, because it may enhance to us the value of the gospel, which we have embraced, and which is to be proclaimed from this pulpit, if you and I will listen to-night to these eloquent words of this anonymous writer, in which the blessedness of being a Christian is described to us. It may serve to confirm, perhaps, that solemn

warning which closes this section of Scripture: "See that ye"—Christians—"refuse not Him that speaketh."

The inferior character of the Mosaic system is the subject of the former part of the whole passage which I read just now. It is sketched rhetorically in the opening verses, under a number of figures borrowed from the analogies in Exodus and Deuteronomy. A very few words will serve to show this, and then we may dismiss it for the present. The people of Israel were very near to Jehovah, in that great national covenant of Sinai that bound them to keep God's law. But the magnificent scene, with its accessories of majesty and terror, forms, according to our writer, a fitting frame and expression for the religious character of that system which it introduces. As was Sinai, so was Mosaism throughout—a religion more of externals than of the spirit, a religion of alarm rather than of peace. For it is on these two characteristics that the author with his wonted skill fastens your regard. The famous Arabian hill on which God appeared as Legislator and Covenanter was a material hill, mere common rock, that might be touched by any man's finger. Its splendour was the splendour of earthly lightning, the gloom of it was the gloom of cloud and tempest. In all this there was nothing celestial, nothing immaterial, and therefore nothing enduring; for the terrestrial, the physical, is always transient. It is the spiritual that abides, that alone is real. And what was the impression which the tremendous scene and all this physical exercise left on the spectators of it? It was simply an impression

of terror. When beneath the touch of God the solid granite mountain rock is ready to pass away; when through the murky curtain the mist and storm, rent by the blast, the angry flash seemed to strike dismay upon the trembling camp, all the bare wilderness shuddered at the trumpets of heaven, and drove the mob back in abject alarm from the spot; Mosaism witnessed to the terrific side of the Divine nature in all its rigorous code, all its death penalties, its miracles of judgment, its hecatombs of slain victims, its purification by incessant blood, its secret and awful shrine: it laid astonishing emphasis upon this truth—that God, who judgeth each, is the Governor of this world, that to the guilty He is a consuming fire, and that the soul that sins must die.

The lesson was most needful, brethren, for the education of our race, stern though it was; the lesson that underlies as its preamble and basis any real gospel man could ever receive from heaven; a lesson indispensable to chasten the pride of man, shutting him up to penitence, and no less indispensable to clear the uprightness of Deity and prove that under forgiveness of sin there lies no weak indulgence of wrong. For the individual, just as for the nation and for the world, the way to Sion leads past Sinai still; for it is there that you and I have to learn the true knowledge of our helplessness, and how impossible it is for us to ourselves appease the wrath of God or to conquer in ourselves our own evil desires, how necessary it is for us that we flee for refuge to a hope that is set before us.

But if on Sinai all was material and all was alarm-

ing, in the gospel, on the contrary, everything is spiritual; everything speaks of peace. The revelation of the new covenant, the fresh covenant our writer speaks of in the blood of Jesus, has set us into fellowship with a totally different order of things; an order of things which our writer goes on rhetorically to portray, that he may bring out the added delightfulness, the splendours, of that heavenly nation, that celestial state of which this covenant has made us citizens. It is not with any detailed contrast of one item set formally over against another, but it is in general, with graphic antitheses to that scene on Sinai. In the first place, to the material, changeable mountain there is set in opposition the fair God-guarded city of peace, the metropolis of the saints, but not a metropolis to be sought for among the sons of earth—a spiritual dwelling-place for pure spirits, temple and capital in God's moral realm that have perchance no local habitation anywhere, yet gathereth into its ample and ordered enclosure every lowly and loving heart throughout the Almighty's moral universe; a kingdom stable, secure, orderly, peaceful—a kingdom's capital, spacious, yet guarded by impregnable defences—a city sitting queen-like in beauty and reverence from age to age, its palaces the home of a glad and chosen people. Behold, brethren, the splendid image of security and repose which the Hebrew mind loved to oppose to those many years their fathers had passed away in the waste and howling wilderness! And under such images how the prophets delighted to anticipate the golden age that was to come, and how under these images interpreted in a higher than literal

sense this writer now pictures for us, brethren, the felicity, the tranquillity, the permanence of that vast assemblage of spiritual beings knit into a state under the reign of God, under the law of a reconciled and gracious Father!

For the gospel is before all things else, my brethren, a reconciliation, a word of peace. It brings the sinner back into harmony with God,—I was going to say, into harmony with all good beings. It knits again, under the same sceptre and the protection of the same vindicated law of love, the various orders of moral intelligence which throng this universe of God. In Christ, therefore, you are come to an innumerable company, to a vast and varied host of loving spirits—all yours, for all His, knit into fellowship with you and your King.

Let us look at them. How you are brought back through the redemption of Christ into a mighty community, the community from which by sin you and I fell, the spiritual home of God of which I have been speaking, brethren, the centre of His residence, the mother city of His moral empire, whose walls are salvation, whose gates are praise. What think you of it? Is it an empty spot, a void place, waiting for human occupants? Nay, verily a metropolis populous already with spirits of bliss, all of them the subjects of our King, and jubilant for ever with their festive praise. About its golden streets there go in choral bands the happy feet of myriads of our unfallen brothers and fellow-citizens, whose inmost thought is worship, whose lightest word is praise. Or, if you will drop the metaphor, the unfallen good, those who never fell from

their fellowship, but who missed from that happy fellowship the children of men, are again associated with us when we are associated with their Lord. They bid a welcome to each penitent wanderer who bows at Jesus' feet. They hasten to wait on the steps of His pilgrims whose faces are towards their Sion. They bear back to paradise the parting soul whom Jesus saves. Into the manifold wisdom of God hidden in His gospel they desire to look. They will be partners in our celestial worship, and they will be our comrades for ever and ever in service and in blessedness. Ye are come home, brethren, home to the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels.

The language in which these angelic inhabitants of Sion are described here, the force of which is not well brought out by our version, suggests a vast convocation assembled on some solemn day for stately and joyous festivity. It carries with it associations of sacred leisure and rhythmic song. It recalls those lovely paradises in which the angelical painter Fiesole has depicted the mirth of heaven with its unfading verdure, its golden pomp, its troops of happy spirits that proclaim their gladness in musical cadence and reverent dance. But I think you will find a higher interest, brethren, in the words that follow; though they be homelier and more prosaic, words of awful distinction, there in the metropolis of God, and they are the words that describe yourselves. For under the phrase "Church of the firstborn inscribed, or enrolled, in the citizenship of heaven," it cannot be doubted, I think, that we have to understand

here the New Testament believers. They are—why should I say they? you are the sons of God in Jesus the first begotten from the dead, and of His own word hath God begotten you to be a kind of first-fruits of His creation. As the firstborn of Israel redeemed at the passover were the dedicated first-fruits of that nation, to whom pertained the priesthood and the privilege of approach to God, so you, the New Testament Church, hold a spiritual primogeniture of the city of God. Even while the children of God are sojourning amid the toil and tears of earth their names are written in heaven, enrolled in the registry of Sion's citizens, on an honourable and conspicuous page. The meanest believer, in view of his adoption into the family of God, holds a place of distinction in the great spiritual realm of the loyal and the good. And it is into this inner circle, this intimate and privileged company, that you have been brought, believing brethren, introduced and joined into it, unworthy though we are, if only you and I be genuine penitents and honest believers in the Son of God, if only we are content to stand in the righteousness of Emmanuel. For he who is one with the prince—and that is our privilege, He is our Prince—he who is one with the prince passes unchallenged in the prince's *cortège* to the innermost circle of the great, nearest to the throne, a king and a priest for ever with God's heavenly Priest and King. Oh, dignity excelling all dignities! oh, triumph of condescending grace, that lifts the beggar from the dunghill to set him among the princes, even the thrones of the palace of the King! I congratulate you, ye happy heirs of mercy,

that ye are come through Jesus' grace into the Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; and I beseech you on this night, when we dedicate a fresh place of prayer to the name of our Emmanuel, I beseech you lay well to heart the joy and blessedness of this large fellowship of the saints. For the blessed bond of love, the unity in the Spirit that links the humblest of us all here to every other Christian soul, that makes us fellows with all God's saints, heirs and companions with the apostles and the prophets, surely I may congratulate you!

It is a great thing, my brethren, to be of one heart and soul with the noblest and godliest of mankind, with those choice servants of God who

> "kept the bridge
> In the brave days of old,"

sealing His truth with their blood; with the long line of the unrecorded pious who have been the very salt of the earth in every Christian generation; with the dear departed whom we venerate as our own forefathers, or whom we recall to-night as the friends and the counsellors of our youth; with all the living who in every place the wide globe round are calling on the same Lord, both theirs and ours. I pray you, is it not enough to fire the blood of the young Christian generation, to sustain the weary, to reanimate the flagging courage of us all, to remember how we are as one body with the whole catholic Church of the living and the dead, how all the children of God are all brothers in our one Lord, their hope our hope, their spirit our spirit, their reward our reward, their home

our home, how we are entered into the community of the sacramental and consecrated host, the sons of God, whose names are in the book of Sion's citizens, in the heavenly Jerusalem?

Nor is this all. God's spiritual city numbers yet other citizens. What shall we say of the dear just men of the olden time, the lovely tales of whose piety and faithfulness even have been the choice treasures from our childhood of our imagination and our hearts? What shall we say of the patriarchs and the prophets who died in faith, not having received the promise? What of the dead ancestors of those Hebrew Christians who obtained the good report? For them also hath not God prepared a city? Truly yes. They without us could not be made perfect. The law of Moses made nothing perfect: it was but the harbinger of this better hope. But now that Christ is come, and by one offering hath for ever perfected and sanctified, now that a more recent covenant with its better promises has been sealed by His precious blood, the souls that waited in their loyalty for a redemption that tarried have seen that which they waited for. They have attained the goal of their expectation, the reward of their patience They are become the just men made perfect, accomplished in their hope in the Christ whom they beheld afar off. And they with us are now complete in Him. For the Cross of Jesus our Lord hath knit together in one the old and the new, the ages of anticipation with the ages of fulfilment, the just men of the past and the Church of the present. Now, therefore, there is no limit to the communion of the saints.

All good men find one another in the reconciliation of the Cross. It breaks down every partition wall, it takes away the antipathies and the antagonisms of the ages, it blends in one holy fellowship all the children of God who through earth's long history and time's manifold misunderstandings have been so painfully scattered abroad.

Thus far, then, we have glanced rapidly at our fellow-subjects who are to occupy with us in peaceful and enduring habitation the mystic city of God, with angels, a myriad convocation in festive gladness, the Church of Christ, the company of firstborn saints, just men of the pre-Christian generations now perfected in Him, a threefold society of varied orders of being, and diverse in their experience, yet now united for evermore into one blissful and obedient fellowship, citizens of the same holy, happy realm.

What, then? Why, this: that at this point, my brethren, a more august society invites your attention. Men and angels gathered into one brotherhood; but how? and where? Gathered to their common King. See, these various ranks of religious beings, nearer or more remote, converge upon a single point, the one luminous point from which the light proceeds that illumines, and the love that unites. It is the Judge, the God of all. A judge? Ah, does that strange word fall harsh and cold on any of your ears? Does it startle you, when you have penetrated to the centre and burning focus of this spiritual realm, to find, not a seat of mercy, not a father's chair, but a tribunal of judgment? Would you rather that our author had selected some sweeter title here for the God of all?

But let us consider, brethren. The throne on which He sits for ever, the centre and the Lord of all moral creatures, human or angelic, that throne in Sion is the counterpart of that other mountain throne which cannot be touched. Sinai God made for a while His veritable seat of law, His mountain of legislation, whence He proclaimed the edicts of His earthly kingdom. But in the invisible kingdom, which counts good men and angels for its subjects, doth not God for ever reign? In that realm, too, is He not Lawgiver? Of that eternal throne which He hath prepared in heaven, righteousness and judgment, are they not the habitation of it? From it doth He not minister judgment to the people in uprightness? And is it not well? For, brethren, not otherwise—and I pray you to mark it—not otherwise than by ministering judgment in uprightness can Jehovah be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble; not otherwise can they that know His name put their trust in Him. Men and brethren, the safety of the state reposes on the uprightness of the throne. For the peace of the realm, for the sacred city, for the welfare of the subject there is no other guarantee but this. Without this great eternal law there is no confidence, the pillars are shaken, the foundations are destroyed. Yes, the King's seat is a seat of clemency; the sweet cloud of mercy rings it round about. From it proceed accessions of grace which alone can still the fear of the criminal or soothe the agitation of the suppliant. But you shall never be able to meet around that everlasting throne the pure angels and the spirits of the just, unless the sentence of pardon

that proceeds from it be the sentence of a judge, a sentence righteous according to law. For I pray you to remember that mercy, too, mercy is a judicial prerogative. Acquittal and reward are acts of judgment not less than doom is. It is from the same royal lips that must proceed the sentence which commends the unbroken service of a loyal archangel, and that other sentence which, dropping on your ear, stills the anguish of your guilt.

Is any trembling hearer disposed to shrink back now, as if for him, in the face of this righteous and impartial Monarch, in the centre of His august court of the holy and the true, there should be no place, no safe access, alas, into this vast assemblage of holy beings who, rank on rank, in shining myriads, encircle the everlasting seat of moral righteousness? Ah! well, indeed, may the conscious heart of every one sink within our bosoms when the white throne is set up on the hill of Zion. And if the sacred description of my text had ended here with these soul-shaking words, "the Judge, the God of all," surely it would have been with us as it was with the dreamer in his vision! We should have been suffered to catch but a tantalising glimpse inside the gates into the glory and serenity of the city, only to have its everlasting doors that once were lifted up for the King clashed together in our face to shut us for ever out. "Without are dogs."

Ah, but there are happily other words than these words, the sweetest in all the world to sinful ears. We have a Mediator before that throne of judgment, and He is our peace with God, a daysman betwixt

God and man, Jesus, who lays His gentle hand on both, and betwixt us twain, the Judge, the God of all, and us in our sinfulness, has flowed the precious blood, and in that sacrifice has been sealed the fresh covenant of our forgiveness and the sprinkling of the blood, speaking peace for evermore. God is just; but from His throne of judgment He justifies the sinner for whom Jesus died—oh paradox of grace! He is just to forgive.

It is in one word only in my text that there lies this key which unlocks heaven's gate to you and me, opens this way to the Father's throne: that word is Mediator, nothing more—middleman, reconciler of the breach, link to reunite the moral opposites, severed God and man, to reduce to favour and obedience offending man. By Him alone we find our access to this city of God, by Him alone restored to the society of its inhabitants, by Him acquitted before the judgment throne of its great King. Now, notice: the name of Jesus stands last in this mighty catalogue, the crowning name to make our privilege and our blessedness complete. But in the order of your experience and of God's grace it comes first of all. Let us run through the list backwards. Do I find myself as a fallen criminal outside this glowing kingdom, this celestial city of the living God, this spiritual home of the pure and the good, a stranger to angelic companionship, out of sympathy with godly men, outcast from the communion of saints, afraid to approach the throne of purity and justice? To whom in the loneliness of my guilt dare I turn? To one only in all that realm of all the good. There is no other friend for

sinners among the holy, none spotless who like Him touch the unclean, not another who leaves the golden city of bliss behind to company with me in my forsakenness and guilt. But one, to Jesus let me turn, my spokesman, my surety, my atoner, reconciler, advocate, friend, introducer to the circles of the just. Let Him take my hand in His, hand guilty of blood into hand pierced for mine, and let Him lead me by the hand as one of His, one of His clients, one of His little ones, one of His poor friends, and see whether He will conduct me—and who shall say me nay?—to the throne of judgment. He guides my trembling steps. Dumb for shame and fear, He speaks for me. Against my crime He sets His death for sin. Sprinkled with His atoning blood, I dare stand justified before the intolerable blaze of His awful rectitude who is my Judge, the God of all. There first, there foremost, and then and thus into the fellowship of all the pure, yes, into the sacred communion of all saints, and the sweet fellowship of the catholic Church, doth Jesus so unite me, for He is the head of all believers in whom we are one, and I, too unworthy and obscure, less than the least of them, and yet a member of His body in whom are knit together my fellow-members the glorious company of the apostles, and the noble army of martyrs, and the goodly fellowship of the prophets. And washed in the same blood as they, and made like them a friend of Jesus, I am united in spirit to the pure company of the redeemed whom no man can number, the enrolled citizens of the celestial empire. With angels, too, with angels doth this Lord of angels

make me acquainted, for they that rejoiced with Him over His conquest, over the sheep that was lost, will wait upon us for His dear sake as the heirs of salvation, guarding our pilgrim steps, and expecting the hour when they may bid us welcome with jubilant escort into the palace of our King. Then at length shall fly back at Jesus' word—for He only speaks the "open sesame" of heaven—the everlasting golden gates that were barred against my importunity and yours; and the meanest of us all, the worst of all for whom this Mediator's death avails, who have fled for refuge to this surety, shall be judged worthy to walk the shining pavement of God's heavenly city, to mingle in the pure festivity of its inhabitants, and to rest for ever in the shelter of its sure defence. Blessed are ye who come to Jesus, and so come with Him to a new covenant of peace with God, to an inheritance incorruptible, a city celestial, a company innumerable, a fellowship spiritual and abiding, a kingdom which cannot be moved. To this one and all are bidden, brethren. Come, come; come one, come all. Him that cometh Jesus will in no wise cast out. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh."

# SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS;

## OR, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHRISTIANS FOR THE EXERCISE OF THE SPIRIT'S POWER.

BY THE REV. J. MONRO GIBSON, D.D.*

THE Church of Christ now knows her calling reasonably well. She does not cease to regard the glory of God as her great aim; but she realises now that she is called to promote it, not so much by ascending into the empyrean, and vindicating against all gainsayers what is supposed to be the transcendental truth discovered there, but by going down into the world of men, which is her field, with the help and healing of His gospel who loved to call Himself "the Son of man," "who went about doing good," and "healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Salvation is our watchword, and always will be; but by this we mean not safety and happiness in the next world merely, but salvation here and now—salvation, not of the soul as distinguished from the body, nor of the body as distinguished from the soul, but the saving of men

* The Moderator's address at the opening of the English Presbyterian Synod in Regent's Square Church, London, April 27th, 1891

and women and children, body, soul and spirit, first from sin, and also, and no less certainly, from misery —a double salvation, which in our day, as in the days of our Lord, must go on hand in hand. The time has gone by when any reputable body of Christians can be content with getting their own souls saved, making their congregations self-sustaining, and promoting the prosperity of their church. The Master's great command has rung out anew in the hearing of His disciples: "Go ye and preach the gospel to every creature." The rallying cry is no longer "Salvation for me and mine," but "The world for Christ." It is "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come"; and by this is understood not only the carrying of the gospel message over land and sea to the ends of the earth, but the bringing of gospel blessings home to all ranks and conditions of men, the arresting of the ravages of drink and of preventable disease, the curbing of selfishness, the overthrow of all social as well as political tyranny, the abolishing of pauperism, the destruction of caste antipathies, the healing of the strife between labour and capital, the recognition everywhere of the Fatherhood of God, and the realisation of the universal brotherhood of man—nothing less, in fact, than the presence and power of the kingdom of heaven all over the earth: "Thy will be done *in earth*, as it is in heaven."

A mighty undertaking, and one which does not grow easier as we come to closer quarters. Difficulties seem to multiply on every hand; and many well-meant efforts not only fail, but sometimes do more harm than good. So many and great are the

discouragements that there are those who think the world is getting worse and worse, and that nothing short of a great miraculous intervention can meet the terrible exigencies of the time.

Yet it would seem that even under the present dispensation our resources ought to be sufficient. Did not our Lord say, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth," and make that grand assurance the basis of His great command? What more can be expected or desired? It is quite obvious that He did not consider the resources placed at the disposal of His people inadequate to the work He gave them to do. How comes it, then, that they seem to fail?

The supineness of the Church is a ready answer; and it has been only too sufficient in days gone by, when it could scarcely be said that any attempt was made to grapple with the evils that curse humanity. But, though there is still far too much indifference throughout the Church, it cannot be denied that there has been a great awakening, and that efforts have been put forth, and are now being put forth, on a considerable scale, without as yet the results which might reasonably be expected, considering the unlimited spiritual power at our disposal.

Is it, then, that too little has been made of the spiritual power? Have we paid too little heed to that word which came of old to Zerubbabel, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord"? There may be some force in this, too. We rely, perhaps, on the might of argument to cope with the forces of unbelief, and are disappointed to find that

what seems to us unanswerable proof produces not the least effect on those to whom it is addressed. We rely on the power of money to relieve the woes of poverty, and are mortified to find, as we so often do, that it only aggravates the misery it was meant to cure. We look to the Legislature for the remedy of social evils, and find that, however much these may be reduced by the wise intervention of the State, they refuse to yield to any external methods of repression. We rely upon the forthputting of great efforts, with new methods and appliances, and discover after all that, somehow or other, they do not accomplish more than a fraction of what had been eagerly expected. Is there too much reliance on the arm of flesh and too little dependence on the power of the Spirit?

Yet surely there is no lack of recognition of Divine power as always necessary. It is the veriest commonplace of our sermons and addresses, and is never absent from our prayers. If, on the one hand, we are getting earnestly to work, and, on the other, are depending sincerely on the Divine power, what more is wanted?

May there not be wanting some link between the power and the work, some connecting medium to render the power available? May it not resolve itself into a question of conveyance? Of what use is the most inexhaustible mine if the means are wanting of bringing its wealth into the markets of the world? Of what avail is the power of Niagara, or the immeasurable energy of the tides of the ocean, if the vast store of force cannot be distributed to the points where it is needed for the world's work? Who can

measure the force of the wind? Yet how little can man make of it! Unless there be a sail spread to catch it, it may blow as it list and man's work remain undone. Why is it that on a hot summer day if you ascend high enough you are stricken with cold? You are getting nearer the source of light and heat, but both light and heat are failing you; and if you could ascend still farther, beyond the outer verge of the earth's atmosphere, both would fail you altogether; though the sun would still be burning overhead, nearer than ever, all round you would be dark and cold. No diminution of power, only the conveyance is lacking. To enlighten and warm the earth, not only is it necessary that there should be the glorious sun in all the plenitude of its unfailing resources, but wrapped close around the earth there must be an atmosphere that can receive and transmit and diffuse the light and warmth which come from the sun.

Thus the conveyance of power is as important in its way as the power itself. And while the power is of God, its conveyance is for man. This is apt to be forgotten. Many expect the Spirit's power to come in some direct, miraculous manner, like rain from a cloudless sky. They do not realise that though the power is supernatural, just as the sun is far above the earth, yet it must be brought to bear in strictest accord with the laws of our spiritual environment, just as the light and heat of the sun must be diffused on the earth in accordance with terrestrial conditions. The atmosphere is quite subordinate to the sun in the matter of light and heat,

yet it is essential and indispensable; and in the same way man is nothing and God is everything in relation to spiritual power, and yet the human side of the Spirit's agency is as necessary, as indispensable in its way as the Divine. It is this human side of the Divine agency which we are convinced needs far more attention than has yet been given it.

It is one of the hopeful signs of our times that what we may call the earthly side of heavenly truth, or the human side of Divine truth, has been brought into new prominence. The age in which we live is impatient of the transcendental and clamorous for the practical, content with nothing that does not bear on the every-day life of man. We have already observed how philanthropy has come into the foreground of the Church's aim and endeavour; and so long as we never allow ourselves to forget the great truth conveyed in the Apostle's majestically simple declaration, "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things," the result cannot but be good; for we have the very highest authority for the mutual convertibility of the service of God and the service of man: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me," as also for making the service of man the expression and test of devotion to God: "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

The same useful and practical tendency is seen in the concentration of attention on the human life of Christ. Time was when the humanity of Christ, though holding a place in the Church's creed, had

completely disappeared from its living faith, as, *e.g.*, when it was possible for a devout soul like Dante, seeking for examples of the virtues and graces to inspire the eager souls ascending terrace by terrace his Mount of Purgatory, to pass by the life of Christ, where he could have had the richest variety, and confine himself to that of the Virgin Mary, though he had to exercise the greatest ingenuity in extorting the illustrations he required from the exceedingly scanty and not very promising notices of her the sacred writers afford. To him, one of the devoutest of souls and most orthodox of thinkers, Christ was God only; His life on earth was nothing better to him than a Divine mystery, every part of it quite out of his reach. This was indeed an extreme case; but there has been the same tendency in much of the old theology since the Reformation as well as before it. And much of the rationalism of later times has been a reaction from that extreme, which has not been without some wholesome effect on those who remained loyal to the ancient faith. The result has been that in our day much attention has been given to the human side of that Divine life, with the patient endeavour to enter into it, to appreciate even its limitations, to realise it as a veritable human life with the hopes and fears, the temptations and difficulties the encouragements and discouragements which are the common experience of men; and to those who never forget that He is "God manifest in the flesh" all this is unspeakable gain.

In the same way much attention has been called in recent times to the human side of the Divine Word

in the Scriptures. To very many, perhaps to the great majority of good Christian people of the last generation, the personality of Moses and David and Isaiah, and Luke and Paul and John, was as completely lost as was the humanity of Jesus to the poet Dante. A text from one book was exactly the same to them as another. They did not forget that it was the Holy Ghost speaking, but they did forget that "holy *men* of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." For all the use the men's names were to them, they might have been all blotted out, and the word "God" put in instead. It was even thought to be a merit to ignore the human altogether, as if the one fault of the Bible was its unfortunate habit of telling us what this man and that man said, when it would have been so much simpler and more satisfactory if it had just cut the matter short by putting the whole from beginning to end in the name of God. But happily there have been those who have shown more reverence for the Scriptures as they are, who have thought that it was not in vain that our attention was called to the holy men of old who spoke to their fellows the Word of God; and, therefore, that it is well worth while to study these men, to make ourselves acquainted with the circumstances which formed the occasions of their utterances, to try to enter into their thoughts and feelings, and so to bring out that human side of the Divine Word which links it to our human lives. Just as in the life of Christ realised as the life of a man upon the earth, we have God brought near to us, brought down into the atmosphere of our thoughts, so that we see His face,

and feel His touch, and hear the beating of His heart; so in the writing of these holy men of old, prophets and apostles, the Word of God comes to us—not as a succession of unearthly voices out of a far-away heaven, but as warm words of life from the hearts of "men of like passion with ourselves." We get them with the warmth and the glow of earth's atmosphere around them. In all this, not only have we the Bible made more human, while none the less Divine, but we get rid of a host of difficulties which needlessly troubled our fathers, and which, unhappily, still more needlessly trouble some of their children, who have no ear to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches in these days—we get rid of them, for we now see that they are difficulties which are inseparable from the human medium, and do not at all affect the Divine source from which the Word of Truth has come.

It is the glory of our faith that it is never transcendental. The Divine side of truth is, indeed, so high that we can never attain unto it; but there is always a human side, by which the Divine is brought near to us, in closest touch with daily life and common duty. It was necessary that God should use the prophets in speaking to the fathers; it was necessary that the Word should be "made flesh and dwell among us"; and it is no less necessary that the risen Saviour, the Christ of to-day, should find hearts ready to receive His Spirit, and lives prepared to be the instruments of His power before His way can be known upon earth, and His saving health among all nations. We must hold with unabated loyalty our confidence in the Spirit's power, and in the boundless

resources of our risen Lord, in whose name He acts; but the want of the time is to realise the absolute necessity of the human agency, not merely to do philanthropic work, but to transmit spiritual power.

Many of the most active Christians, of those who are zealous for every good work, are still far too transcendental and too little practical in their thoughts about the Spirit's agency and power. As a proof of this, take the average notion of prayer for the Spirit. What it is may be inferred from the almost universal practice of pleading with God for the outpouring of His Spirit; as if Pentecost had not yet come, as if the Old Testament promise of the outpouring of the Spirit had not been fulfilled long ago and once for all, when the Spirit was given to abide with the Church for ever. The result is that thousands of prayers are lost by misdirection. People are led to look wistfully up to heaven, whereas they ought to be engaging their attention with something nearer home. It is not outpouring that is wanted; it is inletting. The prayer for the Spirit which is needed is not the beseeching of heaven to open its shut windows. The windows of heaven are not shut; they are wide open. It is our hearts that are shut. Ah, these gates that shut the Spirit out, gates of brass, doors whose hinges are so stiff with selfish habit that they seem for ever closed! "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in."

This is not a mere matter of a phrase. It is true that a Christian may pray for the outpouring of the

Spirit when what he really means is that he and others may be persuaded to make room for the Holy Spirit. But there are many who do not realise at all that the block on the line is at their own door. They think they must wrestle with God, when all the time God is wrestling with them. It is free course for the Spirit's movement from heart to heart that is wanted. There is no obstacle in the line of the perpendicular. It is on the horizontal lines that the block occurs. Human hearts and lives are the conductors of the Spirit, who is close around us all like the circumambient air, pressing for admission; and all that is wanted is that these hearts open to Him and make room for Him; and then, themselves changed, allow the gracious current to pass on.

Many seem to think that prayer for the Spirit is like an order on the Divine power, payable in some other place; that one may gather a prayer-meeting in a West End drawing-room, and ensure the forthputting of the Spirit's power in the East End, without the trouble of going there, even to see that the draft is honoured. We may not indeed say that such prayers are useless, if they be sincere; for how then should we pray in England for work in China? But, indeed, in the one case, as in the other, the value of the prayer will depend on the petitioners doing what they can to provide a channel for the answer to their prayers—a human channel, too, if not by going themselves, by linking themselves in genuine heart-sympathy with those who go. Suppose, now, the whole Church gathered together in one vast prayer-concert, to unite in the petition, "Thy kingdom

come," and suppose all to be fairly in earnest, in what form should we expect the answer to come? Should we expect a sudden outpouring of the Spirit on the unbelieving world? It was not so when the hundred and twenty were "all with one accord in one place." The answer to their prayers was not the outpouring of the Spirit on the world, but on themselves; after which they went out in the power of the Spirit,—not apostles and missionaries alone, but all of them, the women as well as the men, the servants as well as the masters, to make the kingdom known. They did not go and do the work themselves and then expect that the Lord would "add" His blessing; they went in the name of the Lord, in the power of the Lord, His Spirit living in them and working through them. The very first thing they had to do was to let Him in, to do His work to the fullest extent in them. And that must be the first step still. We may not indeed limit the Spirit of God who worketh when and how He willeth; and it is most comforting to hear from time to time of cases which make it evident that He can and does save men without a preacher, without a living witness, without even a leaf of the Bible or a page of a tract; but it is not in that way that we are taught to look for the answer to our prayers. It is not miraculous interpositions we are led to expect; it is not the forthputting of omnipotent force, but the supply of sufficient grace, which would be omnipotent too, if only there were channels to convey it in sufficient volume, if only it were allowed free course through the Church to the world.

We are very much exercised—and rightly—about the condition of the degraded poor, and we are well aware that they need not only better environment but new life, not only cleaner houses but cleaner hearts, and, therefore, that, in addition to the natural resources of philanthropy, there must be the supernatural resources of Christianity. But how are these resources to be brought to bear? As for the philanthropic work, let it by all means go on, and let Christian people show that they are not a whit behind the chiefest of those who are only philanthropists; but, if we are to bring to bear the Divine resources at our disposal, it is not enough to throw in a few thousand sermons, and distribute some millions of tracts, and delegate evangelistic work to a few hundreds of missionaries. Let us by no means slacken in these endeavours, for thus, at all events, some are rescued from the gulf; but if thorough work is to be done we must begin higher up and nearer home. In the first place, we must not forget that it is of little avail to drain the bog from below unless the streams of sin, which flow continually into it, are cut off from above. We must not forget that there are moral slums in regions where there is no such excuse as must be made in Whitechapel; there are candidates for the abyss in the avenues and squares; there are those who are now contracting the accursed habit of drink, and those who are beginning the still more accursed and shameful ways of licentiousness, who bid fair, in ten or twenty years' time, to be in as pitiable a condition as the vilest wretches in "Darkest England" are to-day. The Church has

quite as important a work to do with respectable as with disreputable sinners; as much responsibility for the character of the upper ten as for the condition of the submerged tenth. Those higher up have less need of philanthropic exertions; but they have just as much need of saving grace. This carries us a step higher—from the respectable sinner to the respectable Christian. Where is he, and what is he doing? For the most part making money, and looking out for himself and his family. He recognises the need of missionary work, and he pays for it, and prays for it. By paying he furnishes the means; and by praying he thinks he throws on God the responsibility of furnishing the power. He withholds the one thing needful—the channel to convey the power. He is not living a spiritual life. He is not exerting a spiritual influence. He is not only not contributing his share of spiritual force, but is positively blocking the path by which it must pass. He is joining, every Sunday perhaps, in prayers for the outpouring of the Spirit; and he would be glad that the Spirit should be outpoured on the East End of London; but he takes good care that no more than is convenient is poured into his own heart and life. The crying need of the time is not money, not prayer, not preaching, not evangelistic effort; it is men, men and women saturated with the Spirit of Christ, not a few, or even a great many, to go out as missionaries and evangelists; but men and women by the tens of thousands, by the million, to be Christians, to open heart and life to the Spirit's grace; enough of them to create an atmosphere absorbing and retaining, and diffusing

the light and heat now streaming from the Sun of Righteousness, to carry in every direction by innumerable channels of irrigation the Water of Life, to take up and distribute the vast unused Niagara force, the mighty tidal energy which would accomplish all the Church's work before this generation passed away.

Where are we now? From the physical slums we ascended to the moral slums which supply them; and from the respectable sinner to the respectable Christian. Have we reached the starting-point yet, the point where the great reformation must begin? Who is responsible for the average Christian? The average minister and elder, let us say, to put it in the terms of our Presbyterian polity. Is it not so? The responsibility, indeed, is mutual. It is common to misquote the prophet Hosea as if he had said "like priest, like people." What he did say was "like people, like priest," which is a less obvious truth, and for that very reason more in need of saying. Yet no one will question that where a general reformation is needed it should begin with the leaders. And who is there that will doubt that if all the ministers of this Synod—let us narrow the scope for the moment to make it practical—were to give themselves up only to the Spirit of Christ, to be purged from all our dross, emancipated from selfishness and self-seeking, delivered from self-consciousness both on the silly side of conceit and on the weak side of timidity and distrust, to be possessed with the passion for souls, so that, indolence having become an impossibility, we should all be constrained to use every atom of our

energy in the service of our Master, to pour out our hearts in pleading with our people to be filled with the Spirit; if all the ministers of this Synod were so to consecrate themselves—body, soul and spirit—to be ministers of the Spirit to those over whom we are set in spiritual things, who can doubt that before another Synod there would be the beginning of a rising tide of spiritual life all through our congregations, which would not only be full of promise for ourselves and the future of our work, but which would tell by degrees on the spiritual life and work of England, with outreaching influences that would in course of time be worldwide? We should in this way do far more to hasten the abolition of the slums than if we were in the course of a year to double our contributions—ay, or to increase them tenfold—for work among the degraded poor.

The great hindrance to the starting of the work at the right end is the average Christian's and the average clergyman's contentment with things as they are. It is our satisfaction with quiet and respectable routine; our disposition to take things easy; our dread of innovation. We all recognise the humour in the answer of the late W. B. Robertson to the old lady who was alarmed when she saw the Decalogue on the wall of the new church: "You think it a serious innovation to print the Commandments there?" "Yes, I do." "But we are going in for an innovation much more serious." "What is that?" she asked in horror. "We are going to do our best to keep them." We smile at the humour of the answer, but we cannot take too seriously the sad fact which

gives it all its piquancy. Is it not the case that the keeping of the Commandments of Christ sometimes seems to be the last thing Christian people think of? What is the first commandment of the Law? "Thou shalt love." What is the second? "Thou shalt love." What is the sum of the ten? "Love." What is the new commandment which our Lord especially calls His own? "Love one another, as I have loved you." What is the fruit of the Spirit? The fruit of the Spirit is, first of all, "Love." Now, is there a church in Christendom in which it would not be an innovation to give to love that Scriptural position of supreme importance? How many excellent Christian people are there who, notwithstanding the distinct testimony of the Spirit of God, that though a man may know all mysteries and all knowledge and have not love he is nothing, habitually reverse it, put the understanding of all mysteries far above love, and even make the supposed necessity for it an excuse for exchanging the love of God's Spirit for the gall of the devil's bitterness? One of the first and surest results of giving the Spirit of Christ free scope in the Church would be the coronation of love and the stigmatising of uncharitableness as the worst of all heresies, the heresy of all others which most effectually bars the path of the Spirit on His way to the healing of the world's awful sores. If the power on which we relied were intellectual, then the understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, correct opinions on difficult and debatable points of theology, would be of prime importance; but the power on which we rely is spiritual, and

therefore almost everything depends on the spirit in which we live and act and speak. Faith comes first, of course, in the order of time, but not faith in all mysteries and in all knowledge, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a faith which always works by love, so much so that the absence of love not only unfits for transmitting the Spirit's power, but is the very negation of discipleship: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

But "God is light" as well as love; and the Spirit must not only grant us His grace, but guide us into His truth. Here again the one thing needful is to let the Spirit in, without fear of any innovations He may make. Not that there can be any innovation on "the truth as it is in Jesus," who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," or on the truth as taught by the Spirit through apostles and prophets. But the truth of God is one thing, and man's mode of viewing and presenting it is another; and while we are unflinchingly loyal to all that God has clearly revealed, it becomes us to hold with a very loose grasp the "doctrines and commandments of men." We have, indeed, to be on our guard against that notion of loyalty to truth which really means blind acceptance of what men in past ages have said. We must be most careful not to stamp with Divine authority that which is only a phase, perhaps a passing phase, of human thought, the effect of the passing away of which will be to create the notion that the Word of God is passing too. It is apt to be forgotten that loyalty to the Spirit not only demands that we do not surrender any truth committed to our keeping,

but equally that we do not insist on more than He insists on. There is a plague on those who add as well as those who take away, and the warning against overloading comes first, as if it were the more dangerous and the more insidious of the two: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book."

The Spirit was present, no doubt, with the revered Fathers of the Church to whom we are indebted for the systematising of the truth revealed in Holy Scripture. But the presence of the Spirit did not guarantee them, any more than it guarantees us, against error. The very holiest and best are liable to error, and it therefore becomes all Christians to keep their minds open to any new light the Spirit of God may have for them. We must be loyal to Christ as a present Lord, walking now in the midst of the golden candlesticks. We cannot do without the old foundations. Thanks be to God that they have been laid deep and strong and sure, never to be moved. But the householder has to do with things new as well as old. The Tree of Life is the same as ever in its old roots and its strong stem; but year by year it must bring forth fruit, and we must not blame those who prefer that which is fresh and full of recent sap to the dried or canned produce of fifty or five hundred years ago. The Church of the Rock must be also the Church of the Vine; and it needs the daily tending and guiding of the heavenly Husbandman. So we need guidance still. We need the guidance of the Spirit day by day, year after year; the Church needs it generation after generation, for each generation has its own

difficulties and problems ; and that Apocalyptic word of the first century is by no means obsolete in the nineteenth, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit *saith* unto the churches."

We open all our Church courts with prayers for the Spirit's guidance. Of what value is such an appeal from those who never dream of such a thing as the possibility of their changing their minds? The too scant attendance at the opening devotions is felt by all of us to be a reproach ; but surely those who absent themselves altogether cannot grieve the Spirit more than those who make the request for guidance a mere form of words. The man who is quite certain he is right in matters on which true Christians seriously differ, who never for a moment entertains the possibility of his being mistaken, grieves the Spirit in both departments of His work—first in that of grace, for he shows himself destitute of humility, and then in that of truth, for he virtually declines the Spirit's guidance. He may, indeed, think he is only shutting his mind to human influence, as one who should say, "I am open to conviction, but I would like to see the man who would convince me," and still leaving it open to Divine interference. But what reason has he to expect that God will work a miracle for his enlightenment, if he closes his mind against the ordinary channels of spiritual guidance, the intercommunion in a frank, humble, teachable spirit with those in whom the Spirit of God dwells? If Christians only met each other in that spirit, though differences of opinion would not cease, they would cease to interfere with the unity of the Spirit or

weaken the bond of peace, we should be "of one heart and one soul," and though never quite of one mind, should attain sufficient harmony in the realisation of the noble motto: "In things essential, unity; in things indifferent, liberty; in all things, charity."

So far we have been speaking of letting the Spirit in; it would now be in order to speak of lending Him utterance. But the time is now so far spent that we cannot attempt to treat it, but must dismiss it in a very few words, most important though it is. If inletting is the first thing, outletting is the next. If the greater number of professing Christians block the path of the Spirit by refusing to let Him in, the greater number of real Christians arrest His progress by refusing to utter the life that is in them. Oh, there are utterances enough—too many—from our pulpits and through the press, in the approved and conventional channels; but where is that spontaneous, frank interchange of thought and feeling which in the early Church went by the name of "Fellowship," and was such a power for the propagation of the gospel? There is no prayer more needed in our time than that old one, "O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise"; and that not only in the service of praise, though that is of far greater importance than many of us imagine. For a vast number of the members of our churches it is the one opportunity they have of utterance, and one would think that the effect of the repression at other times would be such a burst of praise, such an outpouring of soul, that it would be impossible for the most stout-hearted stranger to enter such an assembly

without feeling the tides of spiritual power, and realising for the time that he was at the gate of heaven. There is an untold amount of unused spiritual power in the service of praise. But utterance is wanted not so much in the Church as in the world, in the ordinary course of daily life; for there are thousands of people who are quite ready to sing,

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear,"

and yet take very good care that they never sound it either in a believer's or an unbeliever's ear. Oh, this pitiful isolation—how effectually it prevents all accumulation of the heavenly electricity; how hopelessly it bars the path of the Spirit on His way to the winning of the heart of the world!

We do not forget that there are other ways of uttering the life that is in us than by the lips. We do not forget that actions speak louder than words. Which of us is there who is not stirred by the spiritual eloquence of those timely gifts in the north, which have led to the enfranchisement from debt of a whole Presbytery, and those stimulating benefactions in the south which have made so many of our London congregations to rejoice and be exceeding glad? We do not forget that our Lord was no less God manifest in the flesh during the many quiet years spent in the workshop at Nazareth than in the brief crowded period of His ministry.

The sum of the whole is that for the winning of the world to Christ we are not to wait for some new miraculous interposition, for the resources of Divine

grace are fully adequate if only the human agency were furnished in sufficient force; that the demonstration of the Spirit which is needed must find its sphere in human hearts and lives open first to give Him entrance, and then to give Him utterance; to allow Him first to impress Himself upon them, and then to express Himself by them; as of old, the Word must be made flesh, the mystery of the Incarnation must be repeated in the Church of Christ, which is His body. Then would all our difficulties disappear, and the world be speedily won for Christ. The controversy about miracles would be brought to an end by a standing miracle of grace. The deity of Christ would be finally proved beyond all denial by the manifest presence of His Spirit through the entire Church from one end of the world to the other. The question, "Where shall I go from Thy Spirit?" or "Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" would acquire a new and mighty significance. And how speedily would our social problems be resolved in the new atmosphere charged with the light and heat of the Sun of Righteousness and Love. How soon would it be acknowledged on all hands that there is no real conflict between capital and labour, that the one cannot suffer without the other suffering with it, and with confidence restored and selfishness expelled, the one could not increase without the other increasing and rejoicing with it. And so would it be with all our social evils. The more one thinks of it the more one realises that to the beneficent power of self-sacrificing love, widely diffused and evermore widely diffusing itself throughout society, there are no

assignable limits. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." If only the hearts of Christians were thrown open to receive and transmit the love of the Spirit, the great spiritual temple of the kingdom of God on the earth, which it is the work of the Church to rear, would be completed in a generation, and those hands are now at work which would bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting "Grace, grace unto it." "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

# THE IMPOTENT IN SPIRIT.

By the Rev. Marcus Dods, D.D.*

John v. 1-21.

THE intermittent spring round which these invalids had gathered is still shown in Jerusalem, and is still known as the "bath of healing." To this natural hospital Jesus wended His way, bent on works of mercy on the Sabbath day; and as the trained eye of the surgeon quickly selects the very worst case in the waiting-room, so is the eye of Jesus speedily fixed on a man which had an infirmity eight-and-thirty years—a hopeless case, a man paralysed apparently in mind as well as in body. Few employments, indeed, could be more utterly paralysing than lying there for eight-and-thirty years, gazing dreamily into the water, listening to the monotonous drone of the cripples detailing symptoms that every one was sick of hearing about. The little periodic excitement caused by the bubbling-up of the spring, and the instant struggle to be first down to receive the healing virtue of the water, was apparently enough for this man. Hopeless imbecility—death in life—was written

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on his face. Jesus sees that for him there will never be healing, though he lies for ever there. Going up, therefore, to this man, picking him out of the crowd, our Lord confronts him with the arousing question, "Are you willing to be made whole?" A needless question, do you think? On the contrary, the most needful of questions. Not always are the miserable willing to be rescued from their misery. Medical men have sometimes offered to heal the mendicants' sores, and their aid has been summarily rejected. Even the invalid who does not trade pecuniarily on his disease is very apt to trade on the sympathy and indulgence of friends, and sometimes becomes so debilitated in character as to shrink from a life of activity and toil, from the life of health. Those who have sunk out of all honest ways of living into poverty and wretchedness are not always willing to put themselves into the harness of honest labour and respectability. This reluctance is exhibited in its extreme form in those who are content to be spiritual imbeciles, because they shrink from all arduous work and responsible position. Life—true life such as Christ calls us to—with all its obligation to others, with its sacrifice of self, its honest and spontaneous devotion to spiritual ends, its risks, its reality, and its purity, does not seem attractive to the spiritual valetudinarian. The question Christ puts is the most testing of all questions. It is by His offer that He judges the world. Day by day this question He put to the impotent man is sifting us into two classes. Nothing so thoroughly reveals a man to himself, nothing so clearly discloses to him his real aims and true likings, as the

answer he finds he can give to the apparently simple question, Are you willing to be made whole? Are you willing to be fitted for the highest and purest life?

This man is sufficiently alive to feel the implied rebuke, and therefore apologetically answers, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool. It is not that I am resigned to this life of uselessness, but I have no option." The very answer, however, showed that he was a hopeless man. It had become the established order of things with him that some one stepped down before him. He speaks of it as regularly happening—"Another steppeth down before me." He had no friend, no man that would spare time enough to wait beside him, and watch for the welling of the water; and he had no thought of life coming from any other quarter. But there is that in the appearance and in the manner of Jesus that quickens the man's attention, and makes him wonder whether He will not, perhaps, stand by him and help him at the next moving of the water. While these thoughts are passing through his mind the words of Jesus ring with power in his ears, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk"; and he who had so long waited in vain to be healed at the spring is instantaneously made whole by the word of Jesus. Jesus quickens whom He will.

The Evangelist John habitually considered the miracles of Jesus in a way peculiar to himself. He considered them as signs, object-lessons, in which the spiritual mind reads spiritual things—unseen truth. They were intended by our Lord to present to the eye a picture of the similar, but greater works which He wrought in the region of the spirit. He heals

the blind, for example, and therein and thereby sets Himself before men as the Light of the World, who can illumine us wholly. He gives the hungry bread, but He is disappointed that they should have been contented with the bread, and not have seen through it that He Himself is the bread sent by the Father to nourish the life everlasting. He is disappointed that men should think that God would be content with giving them bread for the body but none for the soul. He heals this impotent man, and marvels that in this healing the people do not see a sign that He is the Son who does the Father's works, and who, therefore, gives life to whom He will. It is legitimate, therefore, for us to see in this case of healing an embodiment of spiritual truth.

This man, then, represents those who for many years have known their infirmity, and who have continued, if not very definitely, to hope for spiritual vigour, at least to put themselves in the way of being healed, to give themselves, as invalids do, all the chances. This crowding of the pool of Bethesda very much resembles, does it not? our frequenting of ordinances—a practice which many continue in precisely the same state of mind as this paralytic. They are still as infirm as when they first began to look for cure. Theoretically, they have no doubt of the efficacy of Christian grace. Practically, they have no expectation that they shall ever be strong, vigorous, useful men in Christ's kingdom. Their turn never seems to come. If you ask them why they are so punctual in attendance on all religious services, they will say, Why, is it not the right

thing to do? Ought we not to go to Church? Press them further with our Lord's very question, Are you, then, expecting to be made whole? Is this your purpose in coming here? they will refer you to their past, just as this man did. They will tell you how it has always seemed to be some other person's case that was thought of; how the Spirit of God seemed always to have other work to do than that which concerned them. But here they are still, and commendably and wisely so; for if this man had begun to disbelieve in the virtue of the water because he himself had never experienced its power; if he had shut himself up in some wretched solitude of his own, then the eye of the Lord had never rested upon him. Here they are still. For the best part of a lifetime, possibly, they have been on the brink of health and yet have never got it. For eight-and-thirty years this man had seen that water, knew that it healed people, put his hand in it, gazed on it. Yes, there it was and could heal him, and yet his turn never came. So do these persons frequent the ordinances, hear the Word Sabbath after Sabbath that can save; they touch the bread of communion, even knowing that by the blessing of God the bread of life is thereby conveyed, and yet year by year goes past, and for them all remains unblest. For all practical work in the kingdom of God they are as weak and unserviceable as this impotent man. They begin despairingly to say,

> "Thy saints are comforted, I know,
> And love Thy house of prayer;
> I therefore go where others go,
> But find no comfort there."

This miracle shows such persons that there is a shorter way to health than a languid, listless, unexpectant attendance on ordinances—an attendance that is satisfied if there seems to be still in operation what may be useful to others, satisfied if they hear the gospel preached, though they do not accept it themselves. It is the voice of Christ that they need to hear, "Wilt thou be made whole?" It is that voice summoning to thought and hope that we need to hear, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Are you weary and ashamed of your infirmity? Would you fain be a whole man in Christ, able at last to walk through life as a living man, seeing the beauty of God and of His work, meeting with gladness the whole requirements of the life in God and with God? Does the very beauty of Christ's manhood, as He stands before you, make you at once ashamed of your weakness and covetous of His strength? Do you see in Him what it is to be strong, doing the work of God in the world? Do you see in Him what it means to enter into life, to begin to live as a man, and always to live with the life of God throbbing in Him? Are you earnestly looking to receive power from on high? If so, then to you come the life-giving voice and the word Incarnate, the Word who utters God, and the life that comes through that Word, the Divine and eternal life that God gives to you through Him.

It is important to notice that in Christ's word to the sick man, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk," three things are implied.

First, there must be a *prompt response to Christ's word.* He does not heal any one who lies slug-

gishly waiting to see what His word will effect. There must be a hearty and immediate response to the word spoken, a hearty and immediate recognition of the Speaker's truth and of the Speaker's power. When Christ says to you, as He does say to you, "Rise, and walk," there must be immediate acknowledgment of His power to give you life. We cannot say to what extent this impotent man was conscious of a current of nervous energy invigorating him. Probably such a consciousness of new strength would only succeed his cordial reliance on the word of Christ. Obey Christ, and you will have strength enough; believe in His power to give you new life, but do not hesitate, do not question, do not delay. Christ offers you life because He has life to give you.

Secondly, there must be *no thought of failure*, no making provision for a relapse. The bed must be rolled up as no longer needed. How do these diseased men of the Gospels rebuke us! We seem always half in doubt whether we are healed or not, whether we should make bold to live as whole men. We take a few feeble steps, and return to the bed we have left. From life by faith in Christ we sink back to life as we know it without Christ—a life attempting little, and counting it a thing too high for us to put ourselves and our all at God's disposal. If we set out to swim the Channel, we take care to have a boat within hail to pick us up if we should become exhausted. To make provision for failure is, in the Christian life, to secure failure. It betrays a half-heartedness in our faith, a lurking unbelief in Christ and in His power to sustain us in life, which must

bring disaster. Have we, then, rolled up our bed and tossed it aside? If Christ fails us, have we nothing to fall back upon? Are we committed to life with Him? Is it faith in Him that really keeps us going? Is it His view of the world and all that is in it that we have accepted? Is it the life that He calls us to that we are really committed to, or do we merely take one or two steps on His principles, but in the main make our bed in the ordinary, unenlightened, worldly, unchristian life?

Thirdly, there must be a *continuous use made of the strength Christ gives.* This man who had lain for eight-and-thirty years was told to walk. Possibly he had never even learned to walk. We do not know. We must confront many duties without any past experience to assure us of success. We must proceed to do them in faith—in the faith that He who bids us do them will give us strength for them. Take your place at once among healthy men; recognise the responsibilities of life; find an outlet for the new strength in you; walk, in short. Be no longer a burden, a charge to others, expecting to get good always, not to do good; but begin to bear the burdens of others, and to be a source of strength to those around you. Before this man could get home with his bed, he was challenged for carrying it on the Sabbath day. Of course those who challenged him must have known that both he himself and many others had that very morning been carried to Bethesda; and yet we can scarcely conclude, as is often done, from the fact that the Jews thus challenged the healed man, that they were mischievously seeking

occasion against Jesus. They would have stopped any one going through the streets of Jerusalem on the Sabbath with a bundle. In fact, they had Scripture on their side, and founded on the words of Jeremiah, "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day." Explicit enough! Even in our own streets a man carrying a large package on Sunday would attract the suspicion of the religious, and possibly of the police. We must not, then, find a malicious intention towards Jesus, but merely the accustomed thoughtlessness of bigotry and literalism in this challenging of the healed man. But to their "It is not lawful" the man promptly answers—though, perhaps, only meaning to screen himself by throwing the blame on others—"He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed." The man quite naturally, and without till now reflecting on his conduct, had listened to the word of Christ as authoritative. He that gave me strength told me how to use it. Precisely so! Intuitively the man lays down the fundamental principle of Christian obedience. If Christ is the source of life to me, then He is also the source of law to me. If without Him I am helpless and useless, it stands to reason that I must consider His will in the use of the life He communicates. This must always be the Christian's defence when the world is scandalised by anything that he does in obedience to Christ; when he goes in the face of the world's traditions and customs, when he is challenged for singularity, for over-preciseness, for innovation of any kind. This is the law which the Christian must ever bear in mind when he fears to thwart any

prejudice of the world, when he is tempted to bide his time among the impotent folk and not fly in the face of established usage ; when, though he has distinctly understood what he ought to do, so many difficulties threaten—so much popular suspicion threatens, that he is tempted to withdraw into obscurity and indolence—this is the law on which he has to fall back. It is the same voice which gives life and directs life. Shall I, then, refuse it in both cases, or shall I listen in both cases ? Shall I shrink from its directions and lie down again in sin, or shall I accept life and with it the still greater boon of spending life as Christ directs ?

But though the man had thus instinctively obeyed Jesus, he actually had not had the curiosity to ask who He was. Is it not almost incredible that he should so immediately have lost sight of the Person to whom he was so indebted ? But so taken up is he with his own sensations, so occupied with gathering up his mats, so beset by the congratulations and inquiries of his comrades of the porch, that before he bethinks himself Jesus is gone, lost in the crowd which John says was in that place. Among those who do undoubtedly profit by Christ's work there is a most lamentable and culpable lack of interest in His person. It does not seem to matter from whom they have received these benefits so long as they have them. They do not seem drawn to Christ's person, ever following to know more of Him, to enjoy His society, if possible to help Him in His work, as the poor demoniac would have done, who would gladly have left home and country, and who cared not what line

of life he was thrown out of, and what thrown into, if only he might be with Christ. If one were to put the case that my prospects were eternally and in each particular changed by the intervention of One whose love is infinite blessing, and if it were asked what would be my feeling, what my conduct towards such a person, of course I would say, He would have an unrivalled interest for me, I should be irresistibly drawn into the most intimate personal knowledge of and relation with Him, I should be His man. But no—the melancholy truth is far otherwise. The gift is delighted in, but the Giver is suffered to be lost in the crowd. The spectacle is presented of a vast number of persons made blessed through the intervention of Christ who yet are more concerned to exhibit their own new life and acquirements than to identify and keep hold of Him to whom they owe all, and serve Him with their life.

Although the healed man seems to have had little interest in Christ, Christ, as always, had the deepest interest in him, and kept His eye upon him. That is our safety. Finding him in the Temple, where he had gone to give thanks for his recovery, or to see a place from which he had been so long excluded, or, possibly, that he might be in a crowd, our Lord addresses to him the emphatic words, "Sin no more, lest a worst thing come unto thee." The natural inference from these words is that the man's disease had been brought on by sin in early life—one more instance of the lifelong misery that a man may incur by almost his earliest responsible acts, and the difficulties and shame with which a lad or a boy may

unwittingly fill his own life ; but an instance, also, of the willingness with which Christ delivers us even from miseries we have richly brought upon ourselves. That does not exclude us from His healing mercy. Further still, it is an instance of the vitality of sin. This man's lifelong punishment had not broken the power of sin within him. He knew why he was diseased and shattered. Every pain he felt, every desire which through weakness he could not gratify, every vexing thought of what he might have made of life, and what he had made of it, made him hate his sin as the cause of his wretchedness, and yet at the end of these eight-and-thirty years of punishment Christ recognised in him, even in the very first hours of restored health, a liability or something more to return to sin. We need not be surprised at this : every day we see the same. Every day we see men keeping themselves down and gathering round themselves all manner of misery by persisting in recognised sin. We say of this man and that, How is it possible he can still cleave to his sin, no better, no wiser for all he has gone through ?—one would have thought former lessons sufficient. But no amount of mere suffering purifies from sin. One has sometimes a kind of satisfaction in reaping the consequences of sin, as if that would deter from future sin. If this will not do, if this does not help us, then what will ? Partly the perception that already in His love and goodness God forgives us, and partly the belief that when Christ calls us to life, and commands us to sin no more, He can give us strength to sin no more. He who believes with a deep and abiding conviction

that Christ's will can raise him from all spiritual impotence and uselessness—that man, and that man only can hope to conquer sin. To rely upon Christ's word "Sin no more," with the same confident faith with which this man acted on His word "Take up thy bed"—this alone gives victory over sin. If our own will is too weak, Christ's will is always mighty. Identify your will with Christ's, and you have His strength. He is here in this world to speak eternal life to us. When we believe Him, when we listen to His word as true, the life of God enters our soul.

But the fear of punishment has also its place. This man is warned that a worse thing will fall upon him if he sins. Sinning after the beginning of deliverance, we not only fall back into such remorse, darkness and misery as have already in this life followed our sin, but we fall back into a doubly damned condition, a doubly dark and wretched state. Worse! you will say; what can be worse than the loss of an entire life, like this man passing in disappointment, in uselessness, in shame, the time which all naturally expect shall be filled with activity, success and happiness, losing, and losing early, and losing by one's own fault, and losing hopelessly, everything that makes life desirable? Few men so entirely miss life as this man did. Though, perhaps, our activities have been more hurtful than his inactivity was, and under an appearance of prosperity the heart may have been torn with remorse as painful as his, yet let no man think that he knows the worst that sin can do. After the longest experience we may sink deeper still, and

indeed we *must* sink deeper still unless we listen to that one voice that God has authenticated to us as bearing life to us, unless we listen to Christ's voice saying, "Behold, thou art made whole. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

# THE CONSCIENCE OF THE CHURCH AS THE BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

By the Rev. Principal T. C. Edwards, M.A., D.D.*

"I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise."—Romans i. 14.

THIS is the last of the three reasons which the Apostle gives for his desire to preach the gospel even in Rome. The first is that he wishes to impart to them also some spiritual gift; the second is that he hopes to have fruit among them, even as among the Gentiles; the third is that he owes them a debt. The first is the expression of Christian love; the second is the expression of legitimate ministerial ambition; and the third the expression of a Christian minister's conscience.

The first brings out one side of the Apostle's character—his enthusiasm, his philanthropy, his love to Christ and love to men; and it brings out also probably a consciousness of weakness at the time, as if he were inclined to despair and almost to think that he had lost his spiritual endowments. But he wants to come to Rome and try to make an experiment

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on himself as an apostle, and see for himself whether he has lost the power of imparting spiritual gifts. We are not to suppose that he means any mechanical action, any outside bestowal of gifts, apart from his own intellect and heart. It is the experience of every true preacher, that he is always at a loss to know how to preach, or what to do, always on the brink of despair, except when he is exulting in a consciousness of the Divine power. And so to the Apostle there is no middle way between glorying in the power vouchsafed to him and almost despair at the thought of his own insufficiency. So he wishes to come to Rome, to see whether he has the power still left him to impart spiritual gifts by his ministry, and so that they may be comforted, and that he may be comforted, that they may be established by the receiving of the gift, that he may be comforted together with them by the mutual faith both of them and of him. For the plan of God is to reveal His righteousness, that is to say, the way of redemption, from faith to faith—from faith in the preacher to faith in the hearers, and, by a spiritual reaction, from faith in the hearers to faith in the preacher, in his own message and in the Divine power of it.

The second reason why he desires to preach in Rome, is to have some fruit among them : not fruit in them as Christians, but fruit in Rome in the salvation of men even as among other Gentiles. He is unwilling to acknowledge this, and yet he will confess it : " I would not have you ignorant." These words are always used by Paul, and he uses them very frequently, when he hesitates to confess what is

on his mind and yet wants to say it. He is almost ashamed to say it, it seems as if he were a merchantman making gain of human souls. And yet he confessed that it is so: "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, that I might have some fruit, that I might make some gain." He does not expect a large harvest in Rome. Others have been there before him. He has not had the pleasure of having started the Christian Church at Rome. That has been done by some persons unknown to the history of the Church. Probably they did not know themselves what they were doing at the time, so great was the work and so small was the beginning. But he wishes even to come and glean after the reapers, in the hope that there might be some solitary soul here and there impressed to peace, and that Christ might vouchsafe to give that soul to him as his hire. He does confess it that he is ambitious for souls, that he wants them himself as his peculiar property at the great day of account.

But the text comes in as a corrective of the statement. After all, that is but half the truth. "It is true, but there is something better in my thoughts than that. I am a debtor. No, I do not come to find fruit. I am not a merchant making gain of human souls. No; I acknowledge that I am their debtor, and as an honest man I come to pay the debt, whether fruit or not." You have the same idea in the epistle written about the same time belonging to the very same group of Pauline epistles—in the ninth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, where

he explains his motives as an apostle. "If I preach the gospel I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me. It is not a matter of choice. I do not do this thing willingly, spontaneously, of myself. I am not like a young man choosing my walk in life, deciding whether I am to become this thing or that thing, and, after putting one consideration to another, concluding that I will make my fortune sooner or more largely by this calling than by the other one. That is not my case. For if I did this willingly I have a reward. I can claim something for it. I am looking for gain—not gain in money, of course." That is too low and base and mean. He does not mean that at all, but gain in souls: for he became a Jew unto the Jews, that he might gain the Jews; he became a Greek to the Greeks, that he might gain the Greeks; he has become all things to all men, that he might by some way or other gain,—not only save them, but gain for himself and gain men to be his. But that is not the truth. "What is my reward? I do not do this spontaneously, I have not chosen preaching as my vocation in life. I do it against my will, I do it of necessity. Constraint is laid upon me. The dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. I am a slave, Jesus Christ is my Master and Lord, and I have no right to say that I will do this or that I won't do that. I am under the necessity of obeying Him whether He rewards me or not; and the only consolation which my selfishness will count is this, a dispensation is committed unto me. I am trustee for another. Though a slave I am a steward, I am a slave entrusted with a noble message; and my only consolation

is that, whether I gain or whether I lose, I have got the confidence of the Master." He is a slave who is entrusted with a noble mission, as in the text—"I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise"; or, if any other word will explain it, it seems to express the idea that preaching the gospel to all men is matter of conscience. And the foundation upon which he reposes his hope of the ultimate success of Christianity is the enlightened, liberated, strengthened and freed Christian conscience of the preacher: "I am debtor to the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise." It does not mean simply that it is his debt. It means that he is indebted. You must not suppose that the Apostle Paul bandies words in a loose meaning. He means strictly this: that he has gained something of these men in the light, in the strength of his convictions, in the largeness of his sympathies, that he is a better man because he has preached to them, and he wants to pay the debt by preaching more.

What, then, is the debt? How is the Apostle Paul a debtor to the Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise? A book was written recently, of very great ability, full of splendid suggestions almost from beginning to end on the subject of "The Influence of Greek Thought upon Christian Doctrine." It is to be deplored that the learned author was not spared to revise his work, and even to erect a still greater work, a superstructure upon the foundation. For Dr. Hatch's "Hibbert Lectures" can only be regarded as the foundation of something better at his hands.

He deals mostly in destructive criticism. What the superstructure would have been no man living could now prophesy. But in reading it and in criticising it, it is but fair to remember that he is only clearing the ground, that the book does not express the ultimate conclusions to which that thoughtful man would have come. And, therefore, though he deals largely in destructive criticism, it is not fair to say that the object of his life, that the outcome of his thought, would have been destructive to Christianity in the slightest degree, but quite the other way. He was clearing the ground when he was called by his Master. Now, the object of the book seems to be to explain the transition, as he calls it, from the Sermon on the Mount to the Nicene Creed, or from a morality without a theology so he says—to a theology without a morality. And we must all confess, as we read chapter after chapter, that it does bring out ideas and facts which have not dawned yet upon the ordinary consciousness of the Church, and which we must take into account. At the same time, there is one criticism, if not two, that will naturally occur to the attentive reader. The one is, that in trying to explain the transition from the Sermon on the Mount to the Nicene Creed he brings in Hellenism. He attaches great importance to the influence of Greek morality and Greek philosophy upon the mind of the Church. But he unfortunately ignores the Apostle Paul. Strange to say that, from the beginning of the book to the end, there is hardly a reference to the greatest thinker in the Christian Church, the founder of all theology, and therefore I have to ask a question with regard to his

theory. First of all, can he mention any doctrine promulgated in the Nicene Creed, or taught by the great preachers of the primitive Church, which cannot fairly be deduced from the theology of the Epistle to the Romans? and in the second place, can he point out any real influence of Hellenic thought, the philosophy of the Stoics and the Epicureans, upon the mind of this great Christian theologian Paul? I am afraid the answer to both questions must be in the negative. I do not find any doctrine preached in the primitive Church which has not been consciously drawn from the Epistles of Paul. Whether they are right or whether they are wrong in their exposition, it is a fair attempt at expounding. And on the other hand, I am afraid it must be still confessed that every attempt in the past up to this very moment to account for the theology of Paul by tracing it back to Greek influence has turned out a complete failure. Paul is original as a great creative mind. The only influence that I can trace in Paul's Epistles is the influence of certain words, most profound and rich in meaning, which he seems to have got from the great Master, Jesus of Nazareth. For after all, though you may say that the Sermon on the Mount contains a morality without a theology, it is not true to say that Jesus Christ had no theology. Jesus Christ had a very specific moral philosophy, and a very special form of Christian truth, of truth concerning God, and concerning Himself, and concerning man. And though He never puts these truths together in such a way as to form a theory—it would not have done for Him to make the attempt: the Church would not have understood

a theological system falling from the lips of Jesus of Nazareth—He confined Himself, as Dr. Hatch very truly says, to preaching among His own people, and the time had not yet come for a full and complete exposition of the scheme of redemption. But there were seeds of truth let fall by Jesus into the inspired fertile mind of the thoughtful Christian, and the devout Christian Church, and a man like the Apostle Paul, so full of resource, so thoroughly independent of all other thinkers, standing quite by himself, having on the one hand, rejected the traditions of the elders, and therefore refused to become the disciple of any rabbi, and on the other hand, in comparative ignorance of the great thoughts of the Greek nation, standing there by himself, placed there providentially by God, in the independence of a great devout Christian thinker, yet evolved out of his thought in some way or other, the grandest theological superstructure that has ever been presented to the consideration of the ages.

But the Apostle Paul is also a great missionary, the greatest theologian and the greatest missionary of the Christian Church. Mark what I say—the greatest theologian and the greatest missionary in one. As a rule, you find the great thinker in his study, and the missionary borrowing his thoughts, and I suppose his sermons from somebody else. And he does quite right. But sometimes—a very rare bird indeed—there is a man who can address fallen humanity with such power and unction that he is marked out by his contemporaries as the great missionary of the age, at the same time being looked up to by the critics and philosophers

as a man of original thought, who is not to be despised though he is a missionary. Such a man was the Apostle Paul, the greatest missionary and the greatest theologian that has ever risen in the Christian Church, and that probably will ever appear. And it is not a mere accident that there should be that combination in him. The point is this, that he would not have been a theologian unless he had been the missionary he was, he would not have been the missionary he was unless he had also been this great divine. He is debtor, he owes a debt for his theology, his largeness of conception, his power to analyse, and his great faculty of putting together in synthesis a great theological structure that will resist all the opposition of the ages. And he has been able to do that because he has preached the gospel "to the Greeks and the barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise." It was the missionary that saved the divine. It was the theologian that had something worth preaching to the heathen, and it was the act of preaching to the heathen that enabled the theologian to understand more fully what he was preaching, and to be perfectly confident at last that he was preaching God's truth.

We live in a time, dear friends, when we have missions on all sides and thinkers on all sides; but, unfortunately, the thinkers are not the missionaries too often, and too often the missionaries are not the great thinkers. Our young men, they tell me, are becoming agnostics if they are thoughtful; and if you find a young man foolish enough to ascend the pulpit, then he is not credited with much originality. What I want is that our young men should take the Apostle

Paul's plan of becoming great thinkers, preaching the gospel, doing good, throwing themselves into active Christian philanthropic work, and then by saving the lost they will save themselves and their theology.

In what way, then, was he debtor to these men? What had he done for them? In the first place, he found out that his gospel answered its purpose He saw justification by faith working itself out in saving men, and became assured that that doctrine was right. At first the Apostle Paul seems to have had a very simple gospel. At first he was not the man to write the Epistle to the Romans. At first he does not seem to have understood the doctrine of justification by faith at all. At first he went simply in the force of obedience to One who appeared to him on the way to Damascus—whether in vision or in any other way I care not ; all I care for is this, that there was a real appearance, a real communion with a real Christ and a real man, and that that reality produced a change in him which made him, not a master, but a slave from that day forth, and in obedience to that Master who appeared unto him he went out to preach the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. No theology, not much morality, simply a fact, simply telling and re-telling and repeating over again the fact ; the Welsh word for it means to wrangle about it ; he insisted upon it, whatever they might say, that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. He preached the fact, he went about the world proclaiming the fact. He found in Athens men who would have nothing of that sort, and others who said

they would listen to him again on such a doctrine,—the resurrection of the dead; a fact that in itself contained a theology that would only have to be unfolded and developed to give you the Epistle to the Romans and justification by faith, a fact that proved the reality of the spiritual world, a fact that proved the individuality of human persons in the spiritual world, a fact that made it necessary for us to grapple with the awful reality of sin and guilt and perdition. And that fact he began to preach, and he found by preaching it that actually men began to hope; men on the brink of despair rose as it were into new life, churches were formed by the fact, and Christians, the noblest form of human character, actually were created by the tremendous force of the new hope that rested upon the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

And having preached the fact he began to consider what it meant—what it meant to him, how it acted upon others. He had got the idea, he did not quite understand how it acted. He was like a great engineer that has discovered a new principle, and because of that new principle, if he will only have the chance, he thinks in his study that he will be able to throw a new bridge over the Menai, but the chance does not come. One day it comes to him. He makes the attempt. He fails. He makes another. There is something wrong, some screw loose, something which he did not quite know how to plan. But at last he sees the bridge spanning the sea. He understands now his own principles better than he ever understood them before. And the making of

the bridge has given to the thoughtful mind a new conception of the powers of nature, and he has a clearer vision of the doctrine, the science, and philosophy of bridge-making. And the Apostle Paul, just in the same way, wants to bridge over the chasm between perdition and heaven, and to bring men to Jesus Christ, to the development of spiritual saints. He did not understand the science of soul-saving, but he had got the idea, and he went about to apply it in his ignorance and in his simplicity. And actually by preaching, not to Greeks only, but to Greeks and to barbarians ; not to the wise only, but to the wise and to the unwise, to the philosophers and to the fools, where he finds that profundity in which the philosopher and the fool meet together, and where the fool is as valuable as the philosopher, and there is something in him worth saving, even by blood Divine,—He preached the fact, I say, of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and by preaching it men were saved. Christianity was formed, Christian churches were formed, and the Apostle went home to his study day after day with new conceptions of the greatness of Jesus Christ, and a new, a profounder understanding of the scheme of redemption and the way of salvation by simple faith in the crucified Man. Here, young men, you go and do likewise, and you will not be agnostics any more.

And remember that these men can never forgive us this great debt, unless we pay it to the uttermost farthing. We ask God in our daily prayers to forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors ; but there are men in Darkest Africa, there are men in the East

End of London, there are men in dear Wales, crying out for something which humanity has given us, which communion with deeper wants has produced in us, a largeness of sympathy and a breadth of hope, and I trust in some degree a greatness of character, that would never have been ours if we had not been trying to do good to the poor. And those poor are our creditors, and it is a debt which they have no right to pay. We are trustees for one another, and trustees for the coming generations. And the only way to meet God with a clear conscience is to tell Him, "I have done my best, blessed Jesus, to save the souls for which Thou hast died, and I have had pay back in the more certain assurance of the splendid redemption wrought through Thy death."

One word more. Here, then, is the new fulcrum, if new you call it, here is the new basis—it is the old one of the Apostle Paul—on which rest Christian missions in future: conscience, the conscience of the Church. Enthusiasm may fail, conscience will not. And if you go among the heathen to win souls for the great day of account and for something for yourself, you may fail. The Master may fail to give them you. But whether He refuses to give us souls for our hire or not—for there are hundreds of preachers in this congregation, and one in the pulpit, to whom the Master has not vouchsafed to give many souls—but whether we are privileged to be the means of saving souls or not, conscience is still with us, and in the strength of conscience we will go on preaching to our dying breath. Conscience enlightened, conscience released, conscience with the spirit of Christ

dwelling within it, is the greatest power on earth. And I am ready to confess, dear friends, if the Christian conscience cannot save the world, I give it up. I abandon the hope of ever seeing the day from the heavenly Jerusalem when the whole world will have come to the Crucified One, I abandon all hope of making Christianity as universal as the race, unless we can do it by the power of an individual conviction, of an enlightened conscience, "Either I must do it or die in it," and of the entire subjugation and thraldom and bondage of the whole Christian spirit to the Master's glory.

And conscience is the best thing with which to start missions. For it is conscience speaking to conscience—that is the only preaching worth having. It is a conscience released addressing a conscience in bondage. It is the man who has been forgiven speaking to the man still unpardoned. It is the conscience liberated by the blood of Christ from all guilt and all self-seeking bringing the glad tidings of salvation to those still in slavery. For that is what Jesus has done. If the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkled on the unclean can cleanse the childish faltering conscience of the flesh, the natural man, how much more will the blood of Christ, who, through an eternal spirit, who, through an uncreated energy of a Divine personality, gave Himself as an offering to God, cleanse the conscience from dead works to serve the living God! And that conscience, released, I say, by the atonement of the Cross, will stand honestly in the face of the whole world and be an honest preacher—an honest preacher,

an honest evangelist, a man that can tell men that he preaches to them what he believes himself, and is willing to trust his eternal destiny to the truth of his own message; not an agnostic, wearing the garb of a missionary; not a priest, turned atheist and letting fall false doctrine and truths which they really do not believe in, but a man whose whole being is bound up in the truths and the glory of the message which he delivers; and it is only conscience that will do that to the preacher, and that conscience released, honest, a conscience, turning preacher, is the only power that can save the world.

I conclude, therefore, with the remark, dear friends, that we are not going to abandon this world to the devil; no, we are not. We are not infidels in the pulpit. We believe what we preach—Jesus Christ the Son of God, who rose the third day from the dead, and who is now interceding for us, the living Christ, to hear our prayers and to strengthen our efforts. And with this message we face the world. Like Paul, I am debtor—I, I am debtor. Paul against the world, and Paul for the world; Athanasius against the world, but Paul for the world, willing to sacrifice it and all his ambitions for the sake of this more glorious ambition of paying an honest debt to humanity, and thus gaining for himself a profounder conviction of the simple truth of the Christian religion. Amen.

# THE WORLD FOR CHRIST.

By the Rev. Robert F. Horton, M.A.*

"Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."—Psalm ii. 8.

THIS brief psalm is not, like most of the psalms, a lyrical effusion, coming from the experience of an individual soul; but it is, if we may say so, dramatic in its form. In a few condensed sentences the whole history of the world is made to pass before us. The poem is indited not by the heart of a man, but by the Spirit of God. We are taken away to a point outside the world, in order that we may look at the affairs of the world in relation to the great central Powers of the Universe. In this respect the psalm is like the prologue in heaven with which *Faust* begins, or like the introduction of the Book of Job; but it is grander than either, for it is not the fate of an individual which forms the subject of the drama, it is the history of man. It is a little epitome of all that Milton has given us in his two great epics of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Just as in an old Æschylæan tragedy, there are three

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*dramatis personæ* in the psalm; but they are not ordinary men. They are, first, the nations of the earth; second, "He that sitteth in the heavens"; and, third, God's "king upon the holy hill of Zion." And just as in a Greek tragedy, there is a chorus, which passes comment on the action and gives advice to the actors, so here there is a chorus, a chorus of heavenly spirits that opens the psalm with a question, and closes it with a warning addressed to the nations of the earth. If you take this little psalm and sit down quietly and read it, allowing all its structure and its significance to duly impress you, you are astonished to find yourself in a place where voice answers to voice in the wide spaces of the world's history; and in these antiphonal cries the relations between God and man and the glory of redemption become clear.

First of all, here are the heathen and the kings of the earth, the nations imagining a vain thing. They are met together in council, not, as you might suppose, to ask how can they submit themselves to the eternal will of God, not to ask how can they make their government upon earth some slight shadowing of the government of God in heaven, but they are met together to take counsel how they can be rid of God, how they can cast off His restraints and defy His reign. And this is, in brief, the story of the world as we know it. There is the Tower of Babel reared on the Plain of Shinar, a great rallying-point against the eternal God, and growing out of it one empire after another—Babylon, Nineveh, Persia, Macedonia, Egypt, Syria, Rome, all practically agreed

in this, that their Nebuchadnezzars, their Dariuses, their Alexanders, their Ptolemies, their Antiochuses, their Cæsars are in place of God, the fountains of honour and the arbiters of right, who sit upon the thrones of the earth and hide Him. Or, looking farther to the East, there is that great empire that seems to antedate the beginning of history, the most ancient civilisation of the earth—China, which, in its philosophy of Confucius, has deliberately passed by Shang-Ti, the Most High God, and created, five centuries before Christ, the agnosticism with which we are familiar in this nineteenth century after Christ. The knowledge of the Most High God was confined to the Emperor and the little coterie around his throne ; and the people know God only in him. Or there is Buddhism, the religion of the nations, the mightiest missionary movement that the world has at present seen, starting from an avowed heathenism and finishing in a degraded idolatry. Or there is the tumult of the nations in uncivilised parts of the world, the islands of the seas, the Americas, the great, dark continent of Africa, all agreed in this, that they will not worship the one Spirit that made them, but will seek by infinite devices to propitiate the evil spirits of their imagination, until His very existence is forgotten, in some cases even His name perishes out of the language of the people. All this, and much more, is summed up in first three verses of this psalm.

But, secondly, in so vast and prolonged and multiform a conspiracy against God, supposing one were to stand where Milton in imagination stood, looking

upon the globe as part of the great universe of worlds that fill the heavens, we might almost come to this conclusion: "That tiny and insignificant globe wheeling round the sun has indeed cast off the cords of God and broken His bands in sunder. It is a rebel world, one that has defied its Maker and agreed to ignore Him; a globe that having rebelled has had its way; and in all the wild anarchy of its self-assertion, must now work out the terrible results of its self-chosen destiny." That is the conclusion which the seer, untouched by the Spirit of God, might very rapidly reach. But, no, the spirit of this psalm bids us lift up our eyes from the earth to the heavens, and to Him that sitteth there. Who is this with the laugh upon His face, the large compassionate laugh of Omnipotence, assailed by the pigmies of His making; nay, at times the stern derisive laugh of Holiness which cannot be tainted, and spues from its lips the rancid unholiness of earth? Who is this? It is God: God, who, mark you, is not perturbed by the earth's rebellion, or baffled by the little devices of men; who looks down upon it all calmly and serenely, knowing that His design cannot be broken by anything which man can do or scheme. With what awe do we lift our eyes from the perverse ways of man up to the being of God, and then contemplate His doings among the rebellious nations! Those dreary jackal-haunted mounds of Birs-Nimroud and Koyunyik are all that remain of Babylon and mightier Nineveh! The great Persian Empire that was to conquer the nations has dwindled to a third-rate tyranny. Egypt has become the mere vassal of a

decayed power, Rome a dream of the past, a record of ruins, and Cæsar a mere shadow of a name. Has He not spoken in His wrath and vexed them in His sore displeasure? Has He not scored the marks of His anger in the vestiges of mighty empires that rebelled against Him, but passed away like a morning cloud? They are bound with the bands which they would cast off, and chained by the very cords that they would break asunder.

And then, thirdly, He has set His King upon His Holy Hill. Once more the Spirit turns our eyes from the heights of heaven down to the earth, to behold the King whom God hath chosen! Clad in a peasant's seamless robe, crowned with thorns, and a palm in His hand, set at naught by a Herod and his infamous soldiers, and betrayed by a Pilate into the hands of a rabble—a King who has come to bear witness of the truth; a King unlike all other kings, because He has come to bear witness of the truth; a King, though the clamour of His own people cries "Away with Him! We will have no king but Cæsar!" —a King, though there is no proclamation of His reign, except the scornful writing over the felon's cross on which He died. This is God's King upon His holy hill of Zion; and from His lips came the words, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." The King is set

upon His holy hill of Zion, and though men do not discern it, none the less He reigns and shall reign until all is placed beneath His feet.

And as God's King sits upon the throne, the warning spirit takes up the moral of the tale; it turns to the powers of the earth, the nations that rage, and the kings that imagine a vain thing, to all these weak and foolish self-assertions called kingdoms and empires; these insolent tyrannies called priesthoods, and papacies, and churches; these misguided forces of would-be science and philosophy and culture; let them all be wise in time, let them be instructed, let them recognise God, and rejoice with trembling before Him, let them come near the Son and kiss Him, the King of God's own choosing upon His holy hill, lest they perish in His wrath, and are broken like a potter's vessel that crumbles on the ground and is trodden under foot of man. "But blessed are all they who put their trust in Him."

This wonderful psalm may be trusted to deliver its own message, and to teach its own lesson to us all. But I daresay you will bear with me, if I try for a few moments to insist on some of the most obvious thoughts which are conveyed to us in the poem—these two more especially: *First*, that God does intend to bring the whole world, the whole rebe world into subjection to His holy will; that notwithstanding these marshalled empires and these conspiring forces of evil, He will not be baffled; they shall all bow before Him, and for this among other other reasons—that in the last resort all thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers that remain

unsubjected to His will, must be dashed to pieces under the car of the Divine triumphant power. And this *second* point: that the mighty end is to be attained by that humble-seeming King, Christ Jesus; that it will be given to Him in answer to prayer, for the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and the Son has come into the world, not to judge the world, but to save it.

This is what I want, if I may, to leave upon your minds this morning: *the world shall be brought to God, and brought to God by Jesus Christ, and in answer to prayer.* Now, if this lesson reaches us this morning, reaches us from the inspired Word that God Himself has given us, will there not, dear friends, be a practical conclusion which will inevitably make itself felt in our minds? We believe in God, and therefore we believe in what God is going to do. We do not despond for one moment about the ultimate victory. No trace of discouragement will ever be found upon the face that is turned to Him that sitteth in the heavens. We believe in God, and therefore it is a rooted conviction, though all the nations rage, and the leaders and rulers of man imagine a vain thing, that God will bring the whole of this rebel world into humble, joyful subjection to His will. "We believe in God; we believe also in Christ." That means among other things that we have the mind of Christ; that we identify ourselves with Him; that we think His thoughts, and work His works; and that, living in a conscious identification with Him, we necessarily join in His constant prayer that the nations may be given to Him;

making ourselves, our very bodies, our Church and all its organisations, the temple in which His prayer continually ascends. "We believe also in Christ," and therefore day and night, in no formal language but from our very heart, the prayer must be rising, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

I want to ask you, as a society of Christians, a great and world-wide Church, acting upon the conclusion to which we are led by this psalm, first of all to set the work of missions in the very forefront of your Christian labour; to make it the main object for which your church exists; the world mission coming before the home mission; the nations before the individual; the preaching of the gospel to all mankind before the winning of those who are at our doors, and, though they know it, disobey it. It is fourteen years ago that the great missionary, Dr. Duff, uttered that last memorable appeal to his own church in the north. He formulated this position: that missions, in the large and comprehensive sense of the world's evangelisation, are by appointment and decree of the glorious triune Jehovah, the chief end of the Christian Church; and he went on to say "such being, at least, my own conviction—a conviction which has been growing in clearness and strength for the last forty years, I may be excused for expressing, as from the borders of the celestial world, my unalterable persuasion that until the paramount obligation involved in this great Bible doctrine is more thrillingly felt, more vividly realised, more energetically responded to, not merely by solitary

members, but by the Church at large, in her corporate capacity, we shall only be playing at missions, practically deceiving ourselves, virtually contemning the ordinance of our adorable Head and King, and wasting on interminable, intestine, demoralising warfare, those faculties, powers and resources which ought to be devoted with concentrated energy to the spiritual conquest of the nations, and the installation of the Divine Redeemer on the throne of a ransomed universe." We want every church, and every society of foreign missions to accept these words as the very charter of its existence, and to realise that until it understands them it is simply playing at missions.

My Christian brethren, speaking as a member of one branch of the Christian Church, to you who are members of another and a far larger, I want to call attention to the melancholy fact that we Christians to-day are wasting our power in a demoralising rivalry, that we are acting very much as if the branches of a great army were occupied not in marching against the enemy, but in jealously watching, and sometimes in actively opposing, one another. If the Church had been true to her mission, and had marched forward, unshrinking and unwavering, to the conquest of the world for Christ, there never would have been any division in her ranks at all. An army marching to victory does not fall out ; it is the army that is engaged in perpetuating itself, and enjoying its comforts, that falls to quarrelling from the excess of its luxury. And even now it seems to me that our position may be retrieved—and that possibly God

is calling us to retrieve it—if every denomination of Christians, every Church, whatever its name, laying aside all rivalry, will seek only to exceed its neighbour in the devotion of its martyrs and confessors, and the energy and zeal with which it carries the glad tidings to a perishing world. We want to turn away from the old bad method of using every man his sword against his fellow, and to take our stand in the great army of God in the place appointed by the Captain, Jesus Christ, and to march forward to conquer the heathen world for Him. If one church clamorously says that she is the only true Church, let us all answer from our heart, "Well, sister, prove it, then, by converting yonder dark continent to Christ, and then we will believe it." If another church looks down upon the rest of its sisters as uncultivated and vulgar, let us waste no time in disputing it, but let us simply answer, "We are quite prepared to recognise that you have greater culture than we, and, therefore, greater responsibility; but for our part we sent our shoemaker Carey to India, and our agricultural labourer Hunt to Fiji, and our gardener Moffat to South Africa, and our weaver Livingstone to penetrate the Dark Continent; and now do you send your cultured men. They will do greater things, perhaps, in proportion, as God has given them greater gifts, and may God bless you. Give your best, as we have tried to give ours." Let all Christians for the remaining part of this century that is hurrying to its close, steadily occupy themselves with St. Paul's great thought, "Making it my aim so to preach the gospel not where Christ was named," but "to whom

no tidings of Him came" (Rom. xv. 20). And it is my firm conviction that, as the churches are all occupied in that one simple and glorious task, the great problem that troubles us will be unexpectedly solved, and the unity for which all churches sigh will be unexpectedly attained.

But one other thing before I close this morning. We are reminded in the text that the first condition of the great missionary's enterprise is believing, importunate and united prayer. "Ask of Me, and I will give," says the Lord. Not, I take it to mean, "Ask your rich men to give large sums of money," but "Ask of Me, and I will give." Not, I take it to mean, ask the men who seem to you peculiarly gifted to go out as missionaries to the heathen, but "Ask of Me, and I, as before, will take the simplest men, ignorant labourers, poor and feeble bodies, and I will make them the instruments of the world's conversion." Christ asks the Father in His own right; we in His name. And what is it to ask in His name? Not merely to use His name at the end of our prayer, but to pray by virtue of our own identification with Him, which makes Him the supplicant rather than we. That I take to be asking in His name. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing of My Father in My name," He said, and that is sadly true of many Christians even to-day. Often as we use His name in prayer, some of us never ask "in His name." For in our prayers which are for selfish ends there is always mingled something which is un-Christlike. If we have only prayed that we may be saved, or for personal blessings upon ourselves, or for the prosperity

of our church, in whose prosperity our dignity grows and honours spread; if we have only made these personal requests, we perhaps have never asked anything in His name. For to ask in His name is to ask something which Christ asks without any ulterior motive, without any thought of our own advantage or of our own glory. We ask in His name when from the point of absolute submission, where no recognition can ever come to us, and where we ask no man to even know us, we yet plead daily and hourly that His kingdom may come. When we ask in His name the forefront of all our prayers is "Hallowed be Thy name."

I believe such prayer is becoming commoner in these latter days. I believe that the Church is girding herself up to the great task for which she exists. I seem to see in every record of missionary enterprise, and not least in the brief record of your own society for the past year which I have been permitted to peruse, the sign that our Lord is upon His holy hill, and the nations are being brought in subjection to Him. What could be more significant than this sentence, coming from Hindoo lips, from those who do not even profess the name of Jesus Christ, a sentence occurring in the organ of the Bramah-Somaj, "Christ Jesus is necessary in this age and in India as He was in Judea 1800 years ago. As sinful children of man we, the people of India, are as much in need of the living Son of the living God as the people of Judea were in the days gone by." It is heathen India that says that. Or think of that one mission which your fellow Methodists are carrying on in the

north of India—where for some years past there has been the steady annual harvest of six thousand souls reaped for Jesus, by evangelistic work, following on the educational agency. As I look carefully over this great heathen world and the missionary work that is progressing, I sometimes hush my spirit and listen to these cries of the second psalm, Deep calleth unto deep, voice answers to voice. The kingdoms of the world are becoming the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, and the rolling chorus rises from the gathering host on yonder shore. I no longer doubt that the heathen rage and the kings devise in vain. I no longer doubt that He who sitteth in the heavens laughs them to scorn. I no longer doubt that I hear the decree published, and see the hosts of God prepared to carry it out. The King is set upon the holy hill, His sceptre is reached out, and the nations are gathered, and those who oppose are broken as with a rod of iron. The host assembles from every tribe of men, multitudes upon multitudes, with strange speech and strange colour, but all speaking the name of Jesus, all washed in His precious blood. They come; no man can number them; they gather about the throne and cast their crowns before Him.

"Hallelujah! hark, the sound,
From the centre to the skies,
Wakes above, beneath, around,
All creations harmonise.

"See Jehovah's banner furled,
Sheath'd His sword; He speaks, 'tis done;
And the kingdoms of this world
Are the kingdoms of His Son.

"He shall reign from pole to pole
With illimitable sway,
He shall reign when like a scroll
Yonder heavens have passed away.

"Then the end: beneath His rod
Man's last enemy shall fall.
Hallelujah! Christ in God,
God in Christ is all in all."

"Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance."

# CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT HIMSELF.

By the Rev. James Stalker, D.D., Glasgow.*

"Whom say ye that I am?"—Matt. xvi. 15.

THIS question is old, but it is not antiquated. On the contrary, it is the question of the day. It is always the question of the day; for it is put to every one of us: Who and what was Jesus of Nazareth? Many of us have been puzzled and pained with it; and no one acquainted with the thought of our time can be a stranger to the difficulties which it involves. It may be thrust aside; but it comes back again and again and again; and peace is possible to the earnest mind only in its satisfactory solution.

We all know the answer of orthodoxy: "Jesus Christ, being the eternal Son of God, became man; and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, for ever." This has been the answer of the Church and her creeds for eighteen hundred years; her thinkers and teachers have answered thus; this is the faith for which her

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confessors have testified and her martyrs died. This is the teaching of the Bible, too. St. Peter, St. John, St. Paul,—their Christ is a man who was once a little child, who hungered and thirsted, who wept and was tempted, who died and was buried; but He was also the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person. In the beginning He was with God and He was God.

But it is notorious that there is in the world another view of Christ: many believe that He was merely a man. He was, indeed, they allow, the greatest and best of men. His influence on humanity has been like that of none else; the modern world may be said to be His creation. And He deserved to have this influence; for He was the completest character the world has ever seen—equally filled with loyalty to God and inexhaustible love to man; blending the sublimest majesty on the one hand with the most touching gentleness and humility on the other—the best model of goodness humanity has ever possessed.

Such are the two contrasted views: how shall we decide between them? Will it not be best to ascertain what Jesus Himself said on the subject? If He was nearly as intellectually wise and morally truthful as even the lowest view of Him allows, His own testimony about Himself ought surely to be decisive.

Let us turn, then, to His own words and see what He says. But at the outset I will make a great concession: I will draw His teaching on this subject only from the first three Gospels. I will do so, not because the record of St. John appears to me less trustworthy than that of the synoptists; but simply because it

is objected to. The truth is, *it* teaches our Lord's divinity so distinctly that those who deny it cannot afford to allow its trustworthiness ; and they are wont to say that while in the fourth Gospel Christ is set forth as the Son of God, He is in the three first Gospels only the Son of man ; and the latter is the authentic portrait.

Well, in the meantime, leaving St. John out of account, let us meet them on their own ground : let us turn to the synoptists and gather Christ's testimony about Himself ; about I. His Origin ; II. His Work on Earth ; III. His Death ; IV. His Future.

I. *His Origin.*—Those who regard Jesus Christ as only a man usually represent Him as having been a great teacher or prophet, who revealed the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man ; who taught mankind to believe in the value of the soul, and brought life and immortality to light. He was like Moses, or Elijah, or Isaiah, they say, only greater. Now, it is true He was a prophet. So He frequently denominated Himself. When setting out on His last journey to Jerusalem, He said He had to go thither because it could not be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem. When His fellow-townsmen in Nazareth rose up against Him, He reminded them of the proverb that a prophet is not without honour save in His own country. And on the same occasion He applied to Himself the grand description in Isaiah of prophetic inspiration : "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor ; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the

captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bound." It was in the power of this inspiration that He subsequently preached and unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and this may perhaps be held to be sufficient to explain both His miracles of power and also those miracles of wisdom by which He could discern the unuttered thoughts of men.

But, though this may explain much, it will not explain everything. Although He sometimes called Himself a prophet, He intimated at other times that He was more than a member of that inspired line. He spoke of the succession of the prophets as terminating with the Baptist: "The law and the prophets were until John"; but with Himself something higher had arrived. Though He declared that John was the greatest of those born of women, He showed how utterly different He knew Himself to be even from him by adding, "Nevertheless, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." So, when referring to another of the prophets, He said, "A greater than Jonah is here." And He said likewise, "A greater than Solomon is here." The prophets, like Jonah, and the pious kings, like Solomon, He told His followers, had desired to see the things which they were seeing, but had not seen them, and to hear the things which they were hearing, and had not heard them. Even David, the greatest of the kings and the psalmists, had, He hinted to the Pharisees, called Him Lord.

The chief characteristic of a prophet always was the sense under which He lived of having been born

for a purpose and charged with a message from the Most High to deliver to His fellow-men. Jesus also had this characteristic very conspicuously: He never had the easy, leisurely appearance of one to whom this world is a home and resting-place, but always appeared among men as a herald or messenger, as one "sent," and "I am sent" were the opening words of many of His sayings.

While, however, in this respect like the other prophets, His air and His language betrayed a deeper mystery. He would say, "I am come" to do this and that in a way which suggested not merely that He had come from a recent and casual interview with God, as any prophet might have done, but that He had come from a home in which He had lived with God before His earthly sojourn commenced; indicating, in short, that He had existed as an inhabitant of heaven before His existence on this earth commenced.

In perfect harmony with this is the impression which you receive, as you read His words, of an intimacy and authority with which He speaks of things eternal and Divine. You feel that you are listening to one who has lived in the eternal world and looked on its objects with His own eyes. The whole realm of the future especially, which is such a mystery to the wisest of mere men, lies naked and open before Him, and He speaks of the unseen abodes of the dead, of judgment and eternity, like one perfectly at home with these inscrutable subjects. He always spoke as if He had an original, and not an acquired knowledge of the invisible world—a knowledge of the same quality as the Father's own; and

once He expressed this roundly and unmistakably when He said, "No man knoweth the Son save the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." The prophets were constantly in the habit of appealing to the Divine authority to confirm their statements: "Thus saith the Lord," was the formula of endorsement with which they stamped their statements; but Jesus did not use this phrase: he substituted for it, "I say unto you," or "Verily, I say unto you," as if this gave to His statements the same emphasis.

These are Christ's own sayings about Himself In the narrative itself, where they occur, we hardly notice them, so completely are they a part of the character. But when we detach them, and analyse them, and look closely at them, we perceive how significant they are. We already feel that they are very extraordinary words to come from one who is supposed to be no more than a man.

II. But now let us go on to the second point: His sayings about *His work on earth.* Sometimes Jesus described the purpose for which He had come to the world in terms which might have been appropriated by any prophet—as, for example, when He said, "I must preach the gospel to other cities also, for therefore am I sent"; or, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; or, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." To preach the gospel, to seek the lost sheep, to call sinners to repentance,—these are ordinary descriptions of the work of a prophet or of any religious teacher.

But He claimed at the same time a mission far higher, which no mere man could have been entrusted with: He came not only to seek, but to save, the lost. He claimed the power on earth to forgive sins, and pronounced over the Magdalene and many another penitent the sentence of forgiveness, thereby bringing down on Himself the charge of blasphemy; for who, they said, can forgive sins but God only? To those whose consciences were burdened with guilt, He professed to be able to give that inner calm which can only exist where the condemnation of sin is removed and a right relation to God established. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

Salvation being thus procurable through attachment to His person, He claimed authority to call every man to follow Him. He called the fisherman away from his nets, and the publican from the receipt of custom, the rich youth from the pleasures of wealth, and even the son from the pious task of burying his father. No other tie could be allowed to hinder anyone whom He called from obeying—not the duties of property, not the entreaties of father or mother, wife or children. No danger or terror could by any means be allowed to interpose. He warned those whom He called that they would be hated of all men for His sake; they would be persecuted and brought before governors and kings; they would even lose their lives.

Why should they be willing to do so? What right had He to demand such sacrifices? Why but because by their attachment to Him they obtained that which

was better than life, and by separation from Him lost it?

He indicated in the most solemn terms that men's fate would depend upon the relation in which they stood to Him: by refusing to follow Him they would miss their destiny; if they denied Him before men, they would be denied at the judgment day; if they confessed Him they would be confessed: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder."

Now, what impression does all this make? We are not dealing with one or two isolated texts here and there, whose drift may be doubtful or whose interpretation may be called in question. Here is a whole line of statement—a manifold, varied, but consistent way of speaking about Himself. And if there is any meaning in words, it surely proves that Jesus meant to convey the impression that He was more than a mere man.

III. But now let us proceed to the third point: His words about *His death.* At a certain stage of His history Jesus began to predict His own death. This was a great surprise and a great shock to His disciples; and He did not venture to do it till they had attained a certain maturity of experience. Indeed, it was immediately after their great confession through the mouth of St. Peter that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, that He began to tell them that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, and be rejected of the scribes, and be killed. But, having once broken the ice, He incessantly returned to the subject, adding touch after touch of detail till He

had done enough to familiarise their minds with the event they dreaded.

Now, why was He so painstaking about this? Why did He press on their minds a subject which was repulsive to them?

Well, one reason doubtless was that, when the catastrophe came, they might be assured that He had not been taken unawares, but that even this had entered into His outlook and purpose.

But, as He repeats that assurance that He was about to die, we begin to perceive something deeper in His words: He begins to show them that this has been predicted in Scripture and therefore must happen.

But even this does not exhaust the mystery: there is a deeper reason for His death; it is determined by a sterner necessity. After His resurrection, especially when their minds were more open to receive such explanation, He appears to have entered copiously into the subject. On the way to Emmaus He asked the two travellers, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And afterwards to the eleven in the upper room He said, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

What was this mysterious necessity in obedience to which He had to die? Is it not hinted in the last clause of the quotation just made "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name"? This is St. Paul's explanation of the

mystery of Christ's death—"He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification"; "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

This great doctrine is not, indeed, developed in Christ's own teaching. But twice, at least, it is plainly enough stated, where He says, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many"; and where He says, at the institution of the chief sacrament of His religion, "This is My Body which is given for you; . . . this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you."

Who is this whose life is able to be a ransom for many, whose bloodshed can be spoken of as the sacrifice by which a new relationship is established between God and man? What should we say of any mere man who took it upon him to utter such sentiments about himself? "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him." The weak child of Adam needs a ransom for his own sins, instead of paying it for another; and Jesus would have been in this very position if He had been no more than a link in the chain of humanity.

And here, in passing, we ought to refer to a singular hiatus in the words of Jesus. In the prophets, with whom He is compared, there is no feature more prominent than the sense of personal unworthiness. Their writings abound with confessions of sin, and every prophet's own confessions are the deeper and more pathetic the keener and more comprehensive his insight is into the nature and the mind of God. The nearer he gets to the light, the more conscious

does he become of his own darkness. Thus Isaiah, for example, cries, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Glory." But there are no such exclamations among the sayings of Jesus; you will search the records of His life in vain for a single confession of sin. How is this? If He were a mere man, then it was a defect, bringing Him far down beneath the level of the prophets, proving Him destitute of one of the chief marks of religious genius. But, if the reason why He never confessed sin was because He had no sin to confess, then He cannot have been a mere link in the ordinary chain of humanity, for all the other children of Adam have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

IV. *His Future.*—Mere men serve their generation and then die and are buried; they may have a posthumous existence in their descendants and in the continued influence of their works, but, as persons, they have no more share in all that is done beneath the circuit of the sun.

Jesus predicted about Himself that after three days He would rise again, that in this resurrection form He would live for evermore, and that, at the end of this world's history, He would return to the earth again to be the judge of quick and dead. It is in this section of His sayings that we encounter the most startling proofs that He regarded Himself as superhuman.

After His resurrection He met with His followers in Galilee, assembled by His orders, and said to

them, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." What a claim—to be possessed of all power in heaven and on earth: who will take it upon him to measure how much it means? And, when He says, "Lo, I am with you alway," is it not a claim to ubiquity? Long before He had made the latter claim, when He said, "Where two or three are met together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." And on another occasion, speaking to those who should have to confess Him before principalities and powers, He said: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist."

The descriptions of His second coming are painted in the most gorgeous colours: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with *His* angels." "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Thus is He clothed with the glory of God, and the angels are called His angels. These are the highest of created beings, but He is their Lord.

The immediate purpose of His coming is to judge

the world. He is the Judge of all, who pronounces the sentence of doom or of felicity : " When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory : and before Him shall be gathered all nations : and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats : and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left." *We* do not know one another ; the greatest and wisest man alive is well aware that in his humblest fellow-man, and even in the heart of a little child, there are depths and secrets which he cannot fathom. But Christ, according to His own testimony, is to disclose the history of every human being, and to assign to every one His everlasting station and degree, according to the exact appreciation of all he has ever done.

What shall we say to these things? Is there any sense or reason in attempting to accept this as the description of a mere man?

Many now hearing me must at one time or other have felt the charm of a Christ who is purely human but not Divine. Our literature abounds at present with such pictures, and some of them are very fascinating. The peasant of Nazareth, growing up beneath His mother's roof and in the carpenter's workshop ; the enthusiastic lover of the poor and oppressed, who went about continually doing good ; the pure and fearless reformer, who blasted with the lightning of His eloquence the Pharisee and the priest ; the martyr, who died for the truth, and lies buried beneath the Syrian blue,—this picture is being sketched by clever

*littérateurs* ; it is impossible not to enjoy it ; and you ask, Why does this win me more than the Christ I hear of in church? The latter perplexes me with mystery ; but this is simple, human, lovable.

It is not, I think, difficult to explain this. If you happen to know music, and have ever endeavoured to follow and grasp a long and classical composition of a great master, say an oratorio of Handel or Haydn, I am sure you can remember in it a few airs and choruses, which, if separated from the whole and executed by themselves, would produce far more immediate pleasure than the whole elaborate composition. Indeed, there are audiences which could not tolerate the oratorio as a whole, but would be delighted with its selected beauties. Yet, though these lovely morsels are enchanting, they are not Handel.

Or, do you know literature? If you know your Browning, you must be aware how charming it is, after struggling through his more difficult pages, to light on a lyric here and there which is perfectly easy reading. Selections of these find their way even into school books, and many readers can enjoy selections from this great author who recoil from his longer and more difficult works. But, though these elegant extracts are delightful they are not Browning.

In the same way these pictures of a merely human Christ are true as far as they go ; they are the simpler traits selected from that great character and life ; they are easy to comprehend, and they touch the feelings ; but they are not Christ.

At first sight that way of thinking of Christ as a great

and good man appears to make everything simple; but it really involves you in confusion and contradiction. For what is it you hold Him to be? He is, you say, the ideal man—the model of modesty, wisdom and truth. But I have told you to-day some of the things which He said about Himself, and, with all reverence, I must affirm that, if He were not more than a good man, He was much less, for these statements were in that case neither wise, nor modest, nor true. If He were merely a link in the chain of humanity, then, as a weak and fallible man, He ought to have confessed His own sins, and He was a blasphemer when He spoke of giving His life a ransom for many. When He said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth," and promised to be with His people always, even to the end of the world, He was not a wise man, but the victim of a madman's delusions. When He, a finite creature, spoke of Himself as seated on God's throne and judging the assembled world, He was no model of goodness and modesty, but a man rendered insane with pride, who was presuming to pluck the sceptre from the hands of the Eternal. If He who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," had not the peace and joy of salvation to give to those who come to hide their guilty heads in His bosom, then He was cruelly deceiving us all.

In conclusion, let me say that this is no theoretical question. The reason why we contend for the Divine glory of Christ is not because we are bound to uphold a metaphysical dogma, to which the Church has

committed herself; but it is because we believe that every human soul needs that which only a Divine Christ can give. We call Him the Saviour of the world. Have you considered what that means? It means One who knows every human soul to the bottom, and can meet all its needs in the most desperate hours; it means One on whom the guilty soul can rest all its weight for time and eternity; it means One who, in the moment of dissolution, can receive the soul as it passes out of this life, and unlock all gates for its entrance into eternal blessedness.

I ask you is it rational, is it even moral, to commit all this to the hands of one who is no more than a man? We have that to commit to the Saviour which no one has the right to accept, unless he possesses the infinite wisdom of God and wields the power of God.

# THE CHANGING AND THE UNCHANGEABLE.

By the Rev. R. J. Lynd, D.D., of Belfast.*

"Is this Naomi?"—Ruth i. 19.

THE story of Ruth, beloved, is as simple as it is touching. It gives us a glimpse of a people at once primitive and pious. They do the duty which God has laid to their hand, and lovingly help and serve one another. There is a master there; but there is neither harshness in his voice nor a frown upon his brow. This master knows himself to be God's servant, and his greeting to the reapers in his employ is, "The Lord be with you." The reapers' reply is worthy of their master and of themselves; it is this, "The Lord bless thee." One wishes that such salutations and such responses were customary with us. Something of their spirit is embodied in our "Good-bye," which is but a contraction of "God be with you"; and one would like to believe that there is some trace of it in our "Good morning" and "Good day," or similar phrases. I know that this religious dialect is

* Preached in Crouch Hill Presbyterian Church, on Sunday morning, May 24th, 1891.

easily acquired, and the ease with which it is syllabled on the lip without any kindred feeling in the heart makes intelligent and sensitive Christians sparing in its use. The main point, however, is for us to be such Christians ourselves, and to do such Christ-like acts, that our very presence will mean that we wish those whom we address to be blessed.

The story, indeed, is full of pictures which have attracted both painter and poet. Ruth gleaning in the harvest-field, her meeting with Boaz there, and their interview, the assembling of elders in the gate when Ruth became the wife of Boaz, the women bringing the child of Ruth and laying it in the bosom of Naomi, with the blessing they uttered,—on these we do not dwell. To-day we have to consider the question of the dwellers in Bethlehem, when they saw Naomi with the signs of widowhood upon her, returning to her native home. May the Spirit of God help us, in considering the changes which inevitably take place in human life, to see what instruction they afford.

"Is this Naomi?" Look first, then, beloved, at the changes which take place in these bodies of ours. No doubt time had told on Naomi in this respect. It was ten years, at least, since famine had forced her husband Elimelech to leave Bethlehem-Judah to migrate with his wife and sons to Moab. Ten years of work and household cares must have left their impress upon Naomi, and no doubt the change struck her old acquaintances and friends and fellow-citizens, and helped, with other things which we shall see immediately, almost to doubt the identity of this grief-

stricken woman with the Naomi whom they knew of old. And these bodies, beloved, which are the objects of our immediate and necessary care, are the subjects of continuous change. I by no means intimate that these changes are necessarily or generally for the worse. Our religion does not require us to take a gloomy view of things. Rightly considered, its tendency is the reverse. It is the height of unwisdom to shut our eyes to the evil in life, but it is equal folly to ignore the good. There are changes which are for the worse, and there are changes which are certainly for the better. Nay, when we are right with God, when we love Him and trust in Him as the God of our salvation in Christ Jesus, all changes are for the better. The larger outlook which our religion gives us enables us to believe this. We look through faith's telescope beyond the years of time to the blessedness of eternity, and we learn that all changes "work together for good to them that love God, even to them that are called according to His purpose." This body, so fearfully and so wonderfully made, the most perfect piece of mechanism on earth, by all its changes is hastening to dissolution. The dust will claim its kindred dust; and whether it be the bloom on the cheek of beauty, or the grey hairs which are here and there upon the head of the stalwart man, they mark but stages on the way to decay. And yet, though the earthly house in which the soul tabernacles for a time is dissolved, it only gives place to the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Disease and death cause the complicated fabric of the human frame to collapse

into shapeless chaos, but death's Conqueror and Lord changes the body of our humiliation, and makes it like unto the glorified body of our Lord Himself.

But the question for us is, How are we using these bodies so constantly changing, so soon to sleep in the ground? Are we using their members in the discharge of God's work in the world, or are they weapons of evil with which we are helping sin's cause and fighting the battles of wrong? Are all the changes wrought in our bodies either for good or as we think for ill? The increase in stature, and in strength, and in comeliness, or the bent form, and the tottering step, and the shaking hand: are these changes but the natural result of passing years, or are some of them the fruit of carelessness, or guilt, or excess, or vice? Let every day, beloved, draw us in holy resolve to the feet of our Divine Master; and though we may be so much changed after the lapse of ten years that old friends would be as surprised, as were those of Naomi, we shall find pardon and acceptance if our determination be, "Henceforth we will serve the Lord."

But secondly, beloved—"Is this Naomi?"—the question was mainly prompted by the evident change in Naomi's circumstances. When she left Bethlehem ten years since, she had her husband and her sons with her. True, she went away in time of famine, and came back in the beginning of barley harvest. The land was full of God's bounty, but what was that to the wife with Elimelech gone, what to the mother who was a widow, with Mahlon and Chilion, God's best gifts to her, in their grave? But herself alone

can tell her woe. "All the city was moved, and the women said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi—that is, pleasure—call me Marah—that is, bitterness: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home empty: why call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" She spoke, indeed, in the bitterness of her spirit. The Lord had been kinder to her than she knew; but, meantime, her grief seems greater than she can bear. And yet her case is paralleled again and again every year. Within ten or twenty years the changes which take place, seemingly for the worse, are incalculable. Abundance is narrowed down to the most restricted means. Troops of friends have fallen off with changing circumstances until only one or two remain to remind us of the olden time. Our honour, which sat stainless on the forehead years ago, may have become besmirched till we hardly dare look our fellows in the face. The breath of popularity, which raised us to the seventh heaven of elevation, may be but a faint whisper to recall the past, or may have been converted into the hiss of scorn or the scorching flame of hate. The "Hosannahs" of one day are but a prelude to the "Away with Him!" of the next, and the palm-branch procession often precedes the painful march along the *via dolorosa*, the pathway of tears, which leads to the Golgotha where reputation and all that makes life-work precious are crucified.

But, beloved, while such changes occur, let us not forget the other side of the picture. Changes for

the better are constantly cheering us. While in any selected number of families, in any district, ten or more years may have altered the whole aspect of things for the worse, in many other cases you find prosperity following in the wake of diligence and temperance. Respect and regard grow stronger year by year, as men manifest a loving and unselfish spirit. Integrity reaps its reward. The humble rise round by round on the ladder of life, and esteem and good wishes and blessings accompany the steps of a good man which are ordered by the Lord. And if but little change has taken place in outward circumstances, it may be that a good name, which is better than riches, has become assured, and avenues of usefulness have been opened up in the home and in the church which more than compensate for any lack of worldly wealth.

However, whether for better or for worse, change is a universal characteristic. We are all moving on; but the question of questions for each of us is, Am I moving downward or upward? Am I with an immortality before me retrogressing or progressing? Is my course hellward or heavenward?

"Is this Naomi?" Thirdly, beloved, this question might well have been asked as to Naomi's religious character. Had it changed? Impelled by dire necessity she had gone into Moab, and Moab and the Moabites had a bad reputation in Israel. Never to speak of Moab's origin, the hostility of the Moabites to the Israelites on their early march could never be forgotten. The king of Moab had bribed Balaam to curse them, they were refused a passage through

their territory, and lengthened their march, and their idolatry afterwards was a temptation and a snare to the people of God. Probably at this time the feelings of the two peoples had become more friendly. Still, it was a source of danger to go and dwell there for any length of time. Had the religious character of Naomi, then, deteriorated? Had she forgotten her fathers' God? Her sons had married Moabitish women. Had the mother been untrue? Was she the same Naomi as of old? or had the world and the flesh proved too strong for her? It might have been so, but it was not.

And do we, beloved, not frequently see a change in the religious life consequent upon a change in locality or in business? That young man, free from the gentle restraints and sacred influences of a religious home, thinks it better form to take no interest in religion at all, even if he did not abandon himself to shameless vices, but was strictly temperate. He is now on the downward decline towards drunkenness. Ten years may make a great change in a man's generosity; instead of widening with his means it may be contracting, and with growing prosperity disease of the heart may be undermining the foundations of the religious life. The flaming professor may in the course of a generation become a backslider and an apostate, and as you contrast his early with his present life you naturally ask, Is he, can he be the same man? That is the bad side; but blessed be God there is a better side. The young man or young woman has never forgotten the lessons of home. In the world, away from home, they are prayerfully remembered

and carried out. The word of God is not forgotten or the house of God forsaken. Opportunities for doing good are carefully sought. To do good and to be good is the motto of such a life. Temptations are met and they are mastered ; lower standards of life are adopted all around, but they have adopted God's standard, and will be satisfied with nothing else. It is Christ-like character they aim at, to please God in all they do, and, to the tips of their fingers, to be such men as God will take delight in is the ambition of their life, if that can be called ambition which always distrusts self and constantly relies on Christ's all-sufficient grace. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," they "think on these things"; and so trusting and so living in the love of God and of their fellow-men, their path is the "path of the just, which is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." If they are so changed as years go by that you can hardly know them, they will be the first to acknowledge, "By the grace of God we are what we are." And, beloved, by the same grace the most hopeless sinner may reach the same light which they have so happily chosen.

Here a question naturally arises : Is it possible for us, amid this life of change reflected in Naomi's life, to reach even here the immutable, the unchangeable? Yes, it is! There are, beloved, certain principles which are in their nature unchangeable, which are equally necessary and absolute. They are such

that to be a man at all is to have them. In their own nature they are unchangeable, and whatsoever mind receives them, just so far as it yields itself to their sway, that mind has escaped out of the merely changeable and transitory into the realm of the unchangeable and the eternal. Therefore is the eternal distinction between the true and the false. That distinction is absolute. It affords no room for doubt or question. We may be in doubt about some particular truths; but if we recognise the supremacy of truth, if we submit ourselves to it, if we serve it, follow it at any sacrifice, if, in a word, we live for it, then we have so far got into that region of the unchangeable. And oh, beloved, when truth comes to us as it has come in the person, in the altogether lovely person of our Saviour, whose sublime declaration, "I am the way," has been confirmed in the heart-experience of millions, when we have submitted heart and life to Him, we have anchored on the Divine rock which is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," when our inmost souls cry out, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee," then we have put our hand upon truth's palpitating heart, and set the clock of our lives by the Divine dial set for the sun.

And then, again, beloved, there is the eternal and unchanging distinction between right and wrong. When we have clearly realised this, and love the right and do the right at any and every cost, we have so far got into the region of the unchangeable. If we do the right just because it is right, not because it profits or pleases ourselves or others, not because

we have been drilled into it by training or custom,—which are indeed good helps for which we should be thankful,—but when we freely choose the right, then we may make many a mistake, but by God's good grace we shall come right at last. All martyrdom sprang from this love of right for its own sake. Suffering, scorn, reproach, the loss of all things, death by flame, by flood, by torture,—all were welcomed in order that fealty to the right might reign supreme in the heart and life.

And here, beloved, again we have, have we not, the embodiment of all right, rightness, righteousness, in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ? He sublimely pushed aside as vanity the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them, rather than bow the knee to imperious wrong. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" is the startling, the unanswerable challenge He makes to all the world. He, and He alone, can lead us in the royal, bloodstained road of righteousness. For when our sin had barred it against us, He who knew no sin in His ineffable love was made sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness, is the emblazoned banner He hath given us to fling forth in the van of that conquering host who love the right, who for it fight, and who at all hazards follow it. Here, then, beloved, is God's appointed way to rise above the changing and unsatisfactory, and to get into the kingdom of eternal realities. It is through Him who saith "I am the way."

But further, beloved, when the soul turns to God

Himself, it has entered into a relationship which brings the unchangeable in all its fulness into our lives. Here we become conscious of our own immortality in a way which no arguments and no intellectual demonstration of the fact, if that can be made, could ever secure. In faith my soul has touched God in Jesus Christ, and is thus assured of its immortality. Here I reach a rock which no convulsions can ever shake, and which no earthly wisdom or cunning can ever undermine. And, beloved, it is to this, if we would read them aright, that all the changes of time are leading and pushing us. All is uncertain out of God. The earth on which we live is formed as if it were God's purpose to shake us out of its lap. Reputation is uncertain, but the title to reputation, the character which deserves reputation, is better far than reputation itself. Friends at times are untrustworthy. Money—where is it safe? The safe may be broken open, the bank may fail, the securities may be very insecure. The buttressed temple of public credit may, as it did a few months ago, tremble to its foundations and make the hearts of men shake for fear. Trade may collapse; executors, guardians of all kinds may have been guilty of breaches of trust. Or, suppose you are wealthy beyond all contingencies, still, a profligate son, an erring daughter, a home profaned by vice may prove worse than the loss of the largest fortune. And then, there is the grand uncertainty of all. Just when you are filled with plans for the future, and the heart swells at the prospect of increased possessions, through the stillness of the breathless air may break the shadowy voice of a power unseen, a power whose

commands are not to be gainsaid: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Permanence, certainty, fixedness, a home, beloved,—all must be sought elsewhere. God is teaching us that every day, blessed be His name for it! Were it otherwise, we immortals would live unworthy of our eternal inheritance. How many, alas, do live simply in the present! As one has well pictured it, we are like travellers who have got so much in love with the unsettled and the uncertain sea which we traverse, that we have ceased almost to wish to touch land. We live just as if this heaving motion, this going about from one point to another, this mixture of storm and calm, were all. Oh, it is well for men sometimes to be shipwrecked in earthly fortune, if they are only shipwrecked on God, as on the land which is our home, where our friends are, and where rest and comfort, peace and everlasting love continually beckon us. May God bless His truth for Christ's sake. Amen.

# THE SONG OF SONGS, WHICH IS GOD'S.

By the Rev. John Pulsford, D.D.*

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."—Psalm xlii. 2.

IN the next verse he says, "my tears." Then he says, "My soul is thirsty," "Deep calls to deep." But he says, "God's song is with me through all, and I shall yet praise Him." The thirst for distinction, we know, is very common in mortals, and thirst for knowledge and power. Many ladies thirst for elaborately furnished houses, if possible, to astonish their friends when they enter the drawing-room. That is very common. Thirst for scholarship, and even thirst for gold, that is common too. But thirst for the living God, where do you find that? Is that what church and chapel-going on Sundays means, or is it for the satisfaction of conscience for the inconsistencies of the other six days? is it a piece of religious formality, or what this man says here, "My soul, to its deepest depth, is one thirst for the living God"? Now, supposing that there be here and there in this congregation, there a brother, and there a dear sister, of whom this is strictly true, no imagination can fore-

* Preached in Highbury Quadrant Church on Sunday morning, June 7th, 1891.

see what that beloved sister, what that noble brother, will come to when God has satisfied His thirst; for He will. As sure as ever that is simple truth about any individual spirit that he is thirsting for the living God, the living God will fill him and make him very wonderful.

But how about this supreme craving of the soul? How does it come to pass? It seems to be set down here in this little song in notes of plaintive music. The man who writes it really believes that God is the highest good. He believes that God is the only rock, the only reality. Well, from naturally believing that, he desires above all, the real good, the eternal power, the strength of character that will take him through every world of eternity, world after world, when it has once rooted and grounded him as his identity. Well, what a covetous man he becomes. Poor men who are coveting to be millionaires, their covetousness is nothing to it. My soul is athirst, my whole soul. Oh, what tears I had shed, says he, what agony, how when deep calls to deep, because the world of my flesh in this Babylon round about me, and all the spirits of the air, they do fight and fight and fight against my ideals, that I may not be stedfast in seeking to be made like the eternal God. If possible their whole aim is to buoy me up, fascinate me, attract me, engage me, amuse me, till I drop into my grave, and what becomes of me after that they do not care.

Tears. The desire has gone down into such a depth, and that deep is full of voices that cry and call upon God, and my soul is the whole deep, the whole

fathomless ocean is in my soul; and that fathomless ocean is sometimes one great darkness, and it is night with me, and I am the night, and more than that, I am desolate. And out of this state comes my first thirst, that the God-vein may be opened in my soul. Do you believe that? If you are passing through a dreary desert you say, "I am sure there is water here, if we can only find the vein; if we can only dig deep enough we shall come to the vein, and up it will gush and stream through the desert." Well, that is it. That is what I say to myself. Now, I am certain that in my soul, if I only go deep enough, if I can break through the crust, can break through crust after crust, I shall come to the vein of God, where God's love will gush up in my soul; and when it once gushes up in my soul, it will rise to all eternity. That is what Christ said to the woman of Samaria. "Oh, My precious daughter," said He, "if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that speaketh to thee, thou wouldst have asked of Him that He would make thee the well in which the living water rises to everlasting life." You can see that Christ committed Himself to that, instead of allowing Himself for one moment to be deflected from His object, when temptation after temptation, subtler and subtler, came before Him, and to every one He said, "Demon, get behind Me. I am prepared to go through all Gethsemane's darkness and anguish, I am prepared in My agony to sweat blood from every pore of My body, but thy world with all its vanities, thy world with all its wealth never shaped the object of My soul; but God. And in this humanity, which

is a piece of yours, and which I have taken for your sake, God shall come in it, and God shall have it, and everything in Me and about Me shall vanish except a human form for the Eternal God." And He had His days, and He had His nights, and He had His darkness, and in the depth of Him was the bottomless faith in God, and the bottomless desire, and if you only taste and get the taste in you of what God is, the peace and the blessedness and the profound contentment of His love in your bosom, your prayer will be, "O living God, endless and measureless life, flood me, flood me with Thyself, and wash out of me everything at variance with Thyself, until every part of my spiritual and eternal nature is filled up by Thee."

"My soul thirsteth for the living God," the God of my life. A very sacred thirst that. You cannot say that about any human desire. I do not think you would say it is quite sacred; I do not think you would even pretend that. But you will say that this is a sacred thirst. O sacred sorrow, that sorrow that I remember years and years ago, oh what that sorrow did for me! It broke me open, it broke open the crust of my outward nature, and with it vanished all my earthly ambitions, but it left me with Divine thirst for God. And this thirst and the spring that satisfies the thirst are very close together. You remember the illustration of Hagar in the desert, the poor Egyptian maid, and her boy is yonder dying, dying with thirst. But she was at the place of a well, and it needed that some angel should tell her. And so it is, this Divine thirst of the soul and the satisfac-

tion of the soul are together. God is already in the human soul to satisfy it, but unless it is the supreme wish He won't do it. It must be the supreme wish. He cannot give it excepting to the supreme wish, because, apart from the supreme wish, the affections are not profoundly and essentially open. Oh, friends, to be so exquisitely related as the soul and God are, and yet to have no sense of the presence and power of His love, that is the cross of all crosses. And I trust that each one of you, as a worthy son and daughter of God, will say this to God: O God, I am resolved that I will take no rest until I am conscious that God is in me, that the burden of my life is on God, that my whole real existence is based upon the eternal Rock, and that He, the Rock, the essence of all rock-springs, in me is the strength, and the eternal strength, of my life.

Do you know that that is marriage in the highest sense? Do you know that that is the foundation of the eternal marriage, the wonderful unutterable blend there can be between the living God and the living soul of His dear son and His daughter; all that is spirit in man and all that is spirit in woman, blending with all that is spirit in Eternal God, and all that is spirit in Eternal God with all the infinity of His love, giving Himself and blending Himself with the human soul, until the human soul and God are one? I know, says one, that nothing to eternity is able to separate me from the life of the eternal love of God which springs in my spirit. Now, of course all that I am speaking of is quite possible to be the experience of every one of you. I do not say in a hurry. Make

it your object, and it will all come. That is, into whatever depths you may come, hope will be with you, and before the night ends you will hear the music of the dawn. You don't watch the dawn coming in, but if you will watch it now for a few weeks you will find that it is always heralded in by the birds of song. And I assure you that the Divine love goes on its way; however deep the night may be, these warblings, warblings of the love of God and of the angel world, warblings about the great dawn, the dawn of death, the day of eternal life. "In the night His song shall be with me, and my praise shall be to the God of my life." Is not that beautiful? Does not that make the soul of man a real nightingale, and the earthly life to be the night of silence, buried in flesh, surrounded by the walls of earthliness, materialism always lying upon us? That is night enough for the poor soul, but you have God's life in you, in the night, in spite of the night, in the depth of the night warbling God's praise, and God's praise rising from the human soul in the night, up and up, to the very bosom of God who is eternal love.

His song! What the song of God must be! Now, whether we know it or not, God sings it, sings the song of His love to-day. You know that it is the bridegroom nightingale, don't you, that sings to the bride? It charms, beguiles her weariness during incubation. Think of God, the Bridegroom, the Bridegroom of our souls, and the chant of His love! How He sings it! He says, Rejoice, every youth and singing maiden, for round about you is infinite love. He knows what you are capable of, He knows what

you will come to. The song is not of creation, but of redemption, the song of deliverance out of the depths of sin, and out of the darkness and its woe. Redemption—brought back again; victory, by God, for His child.

Well, we shall call that the song of songs which is God's, the song of songs which is fulfilled in Christ—all the melody and harmony of it in Christ. Our nature in Christ fulfilled according to God's idea up to the final harmonic condition, wherever the man being built into an instrument of music, corresponds with the music of the Divine nature, is played upon by the very pressure of the Divine power. It is no wonder that we should be ambitious to have Christ formed in us, Christ formed in us to hope and glory, Christ wrought out and we complete in Christ, and finding in that very completeness the consummation, of our nature and the fulfilment of all our longing.

There may, perhaps, be young friends here this morning who will think that we elders are specially to be congratulated, that they have all the tussle and warfare of life in the flesh, all the desert days and struggle of the pilgrimage before them, but that we elders are coming to the setting of the earthly sun, and preparing soon to meet our God, the song of songs almost beginning, God's song, He singing us into harmony, singing us homeward on our way, coming to Mount Zion with everlasting joy upon our heads; sorrow and sighing shall flee away. But courage, my young brother; courage, my darling sister; in the heart of us old men in whom God's light shines, every one of you is precious to the Lord.

Be of good courage. Let the young only seize and lay hold of a hope, every one of them, that is worthy of God. There is nothing I see going on here that is worthy of God ; there is nothing that will ever fall to my lot that is worthy of God. Seize a hope that has God's autograph, that life which is perfection itself and endlessness itself. Seize that and begin early ; oh, begin early ! You cannot begin too early. There is much to do. You have the golden age to make, your personal golden age. You cannot, therefore, have too keen a thirst for the gold of the Divine nature, for the silver of the Divine nature. What is that in God which gold and silver are symbols of? Well, in God the love, the unutterable love, that is gold. In God the truth, the faithfulness, the sincerity, the unchangeableness, that is silver. These two, then, the gold of God—His love, the truth of God—His silver, why, they can be wrought and wrought into your very soul. These are the very things that can be wrought into the vital substance of your nature, until your whole nature is gold, like God's love, and silver, like God's truth ; and then, founded for eternity, a pillar built by God, standing in the courts of God for ever and ever. I said, begin early. Invite the golden beams to come into your natural life, and then you will find these golden beams in your own soul, and you will see God through them. It will be a veil, all nature—the sky a veil, the sun a veil ; and you will have spirit enough and soul enough to pierce through and see the unutterable beauty of the great infinite Artist that is behind.

Now, if you begin early with a firm resolve, and

through the grand hope that is worthy of God, you may fall, you may fall again, you may fall again ; but God says, "I will lift you up. If you only take the right direction, if you only make the right resolve, I shall be watching you. Though he falls sometimes, I will lift him up again, and he shall go on his way, and he shall wax stronger and stronger until I crown him with My own eternal love." Hope thou in God, then, in thy dark and wintry season, in thy bitterness, and all will clear away, step by step, until every fathom of thy merely earthly circle, which darkens the sky of thy soul, shall be cleared away, and there shall be nothing between thy soul and God's love and eternal light.

Another thought, with the children's praises—the children that are God's children—the children's pleasures always go together, and are the same thing. So that you find in your growing experience you will have more and more to bless God for, and your heart will ache because you cannot express your love. And it will go floating away, wafted away from your spirit Godward, and all these praises and efforts to praise will only be significant of the pleasures which will come, the pleasures of the way, the beginning of eternity's pleasures. Therefore I pray that no brother spirit, no sister spirit be disheartened. Allow nothing to distract your ear, your eye single, your heart fixed, stedfast in God ; hope and hope on, and through blackest night and all wailings and weepings He will lead thee and bring thee to thy desired haven. And in due time ye who have been God's captives shall see that your very captivity is taken captive, and

shall put on the final garment and go into the presence of the King with His song in your mouth and His beauty. Let the beauty of the Lord be upon you, and His harmony right in your spirit, and His youth, the youth of immortality, springing in your soul.

One word more. Paul says, We preach Christ, we preach Christ. Well, dear precious hearers, Christ is simply God's seed that He sowed, and it is the least of all the seeds to be in the earth. It is quite imperceptible, but it is vitality itself. Well, Christ is nothing but God's vitality in the human seed germ which God sows into the desiring spirit, and there quietly through earthly days and nights it takes root, deeper root and deeper root, and springs at first a lily for beauty, a lily for fragrance, a lily of God, the new nature. And on it grows and shakes like Lebanon, with a fulness which partakes of the fulness of God, and it is to be unfolded in endless life to the praise of His glory. Whatever be the hope, the fulfilment will exceed it, because it is the unfolding of the endless fulness and resources of God in the human soul, consciousness developing and developing in God's endlessness to the joy of His recipient Son and Lord. God bless these words to your living experience and joy. Amen.

# A CREED OF SUNSHINE AND OF ADAMANT.

By the Right Rev. W. Alexander, D.D., Lord Bishop of Derry and Raphoe.*

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines."—Heb. xiii. 8. 9.

IT has been said that every accuracy, however minute, is to be respected, because it belongs to the noble family of good. The punctuation of the words which immediately precede the text is of great importance. The author of the Epistle has been speaking of the importance of remembering the former rulers of the Church, "whose faith," he says, "follow, considering the end of their conversation, the issue of all their conversation here upon earth." Then there is a full stop, and the apostolic writer adds his reflection, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." Yes, from all those changeful ministers of the flock he passes to the unchanging High Priest. The sigh of memory for those who have been withdrawn from them is changed for an

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anthem-like creed. Through the yesterday of our dead rulers, through the stormy and troubled to-day of our present, through the for ever of the soul and the Church, Jesus Christ is yesterday and to-day the same,—He of whom the hundred and second Psalm speaks when it contrasts the immutability that is Divine with the mutability of heaven and earth that now is, "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail," yesterday and to-day the same, ay, and to the ages of the ages.

Now, in the words to which I have directed your attention there appear to be what we may call four great creed principles. First of all there is the subject of the creed. That subject is a person; not a doctrine about Him, however true and right it may be in its own place. We have, secondly, the aim of the creed. The aim of the creed is right forward. Christ is the fixed whole in the whirling tide of events. "Be not carried away," or, as the word more accurately should be rendered, "be not carried aside." Then, thirdly, there is the structure of the creed. A real creed is not a patchwork and piebald thing. The word rendered "divers" is precisely the same word which is used in the Old Testament of Joseph's coat of many colours. The creed is one entire and perfect whole. It is not made up of isolated pieces and detached fragments. It is one as the flower is one, it is one as the bell is one if it is to give out a perfect tone. And then, fourthly, there is the style and language of the creed. It is not to be a foreign and exotic thing; it is to breathe of home. "Be not carried away with doctrines which are strange and

foreign as well as diverse." A great living French academician has somewhere said that the language of theology is not a real language. Rather, he says, it is a *patois*, not a language. We shall not be ashamed of the sweet *patois* of the hills of God, and of the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem.

I have thought that it might be a useful subject for our consideration this morning, if I were to endeavour to bring before you the characteristics of the shortest and simplest of our creeds, the creed which is called the Apostles' Creed. My brethren, it seems to me that the vital and everlasting substance of the creed has been so overlaid with loads of learning, thrown upon what are after all the accessories of the creed and not the realities of it, that people fail to understand what it is. Now, we of this Church should observe that what is called the Apostles' Creed is emphatically the layman's creed. There is no other condition of things to be believed in the reception into the Christian Church at baptism. Nothing else is directly required at confirmation, nothing else when the minister of religion comes into the sick man's room and questions him about his faith.

I do not propose to speak to you this morning of the origin of that Creed. I do not think it necessary to disprove the assumption that it was actually drawn up by the twelve apostles, each of them contributing a separate article. I shall not say anything about the variations in the form of the so-called Apostles' Creed at different times. I shall only just remind you that the Nicene Creed and the document called the Apostles' Creed are absolutely one in reality and in

substance. As years went on the truth became fused in the first centuries under the fires of controversy. The weary round of error was almost practically exhausted of those errors that alternately unhumanise or undeify the God-man. But I wish this morning to confine your attention to these two points—the first is that the Apostles' Creed is a creed of facts, and the second is that it is a creed of joy.

First of all, the Apostles' Creed of facts. All thoughtful persons must have observed that there are omissions in the Apostles' Creed which are somewhat singular when we look at it as a summary of the Christian faith. For instance, the Christian Church goes to the nations of the world with a book in her hand, the Holy Bible: the Apostles' Creed says nothing about Holy Scripture. We believe that we are justified by faith: there is not a word about justification by faith in the Apostles' Creed. We believe in the existence of angels and archangels: not a word about that either. We believe that to the well-being and continued existence of the Church a ministry and sacraments are necessary: not a word is said directly in the Apostles' Creed about the ministry and sacraments. We believe that there is such a thing as eternal separation from God: the Apostles' Creed does not say anything about the eternal death. We believe that there is an eternal death; but we do not believe *in* eternal death, we believe in eternal life.

Now, how do we account for these omissions in the Apostles' Creed? In two ways, I suppose. First of all, the Creed is not to be taken as a *caput mortuum*, a dead string of articles. We are not to separate it

from the context of the living Church to which it belongs. And then, again, there are truths which are not on the surface, but which lie deep below. For instance, when we declare our belief in the Judge of quick and dead, then we imply a belief in life and death as the great issues. When we speak of our belief in the Holy Catholic Church, then we declare our belief also in its Book, in its ministers, in its rites, in its clergy, and in its sacraments.

But, above all, do I wish you to remember that the Apostles' Creed is a creed of joy. Joy lives in it as a power of light lives inexhaustible in Eastern gems. Take its three great divisions. "I believe in God the Father Almighty." There we declare our belief that God created heaven and earth. The question between us and religious scientific men is not at all whether God created, but how He created. The Son of God is spoken of in the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews as upholding all things by the word of His power. But the word translated "upholding" is not intended to give us the image of an Atlas painfully bearing up the pillars of the earth, but of a Divine and living mind bearing it on. The world is busy now with theories about creation, theories of the mist or theories of the mud. Over them all the first article of the Creed sounds forth. It is the splendid song of the triumph of faith. God's child in this world may be an animal, but he is an animal that thinks, and when he makes his act of thought that act of thought is quickened by the touch of faith. By faith we believe that God created the ages, so that the sum of visible order was not wrought out of

mere phenomena. All round about us is, no doubt, an agnostic malady of thought. There are four postulates, as they may be called, of thought: we must postulate our own existence, our own self; we must postulate the world round us; we must postulate the existence of God; we must postulate the existence of the moral law. It is told in the introduction to some philosophical book, at the close of the last century, that a great Scotch metaphysician was in the habit of questioning those who came to him for entrance into his class, and he asked the man whether he had ever doubted his own existence and the existence of the world. And if the man said he never had, then the philosopher said to him, "You had better give up this branch of study. If you have never doubted your own existence and the existence of the world, you will never be a metaphysician." That may be true. The man who has never doubted these things may never be a metaphysician, but the man who always doubts them will never be a man in the truest sense of the word. Full often we see young faces nowadays with the great cloud of unhappy speculation settled upon them—no sunshine, no hope, no laughter, no love, because no faith. The first article of our Creed is an article of splendid postulates. The man stands in the face of God and creation, and he postulates his own existence, the existence of God, the existence of the world; for he utters those memorable words "I," "God," "Heaven" and "earth," and when a man can really say as much as that then there is far more for him than ever there was before. Then he begins to see the great mount-

ains, as a Christian philosopher once spoke of nature, at once working and sleeping, working with all of those intricate interlacing wheels of a wondrous machinery, sleeping with those splendid dreams upon its lifted face. His ears are opened, and he is able to hear the soft, swift working of the everlasting fingers that ply the tracery of the looms of God. And thus in its first part the Apostles' Creed is a creed of sunshine.

The second part of the Apostles' Creed is concerned with our belief in Jesus Christ. What does it tell us about our blessed Lord? Our Creed tells us facts—the Divinity of Jesus our Lord, His humanity, His conception, His incarnation, His suffering life before the cross, His death upon the cross, the pierced hands and feet, the wounded side, the awful circlet of the crown of thorns, the pale and dying lips. What an impression of the character of Jesus is this! It is photographed on the very face of Christendom. It speaks to us of One ever with God, calmly measuring the infinite descent from the songs of heaven to the revilings of men, the Christ of the cradle and the cross, the Christ of the suffering life, the Christ of the death. The Christ of the Creed is the Christ of the gospel, the Christ of Christendom, the Christ of the human heart. There was a great thinker and theologian, not of our Church, who said, that still as he looked at the crucifix he saw the Judge on the crucifix. And, no doubt, there are parts of the New Testament in which we find that about the work and character of our Lord there are depths of gloom as well as visionary majesties of light. But He who

spoke the words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," He that said, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out," He of whom the Apostle has written of the philanthropy and sweet-naturedness of God our Saviour dawning forth in His manifestation, that is the Christ of whom the Apostles' Creed speaks to us, the *vox humana*, the sweetest stop in all the organ of the incarnation. And here, again, the Apostles' Creed is a creed of sunshine.

And, then, the third part of the Apostles' Creed speaks to us of the Holy Spirit, and what may be called the corollaries from that. We are born into a society utterly dislocated and broken up; we want a better society. We are born into a world marred by our sinfulness and that of our fellow-men; we want the gift of pardon. We are born into a world of suffering and of death, and we want life. And what does the third and last part of the Creed speak to us about? It speaks to us about a great Divine superhuman society, continuous, visible, Christ's Holy Catholic Church, "From the rock as if by magic grown, Eternal, silent, beautiful, alone." It speaks to us of sin forgiven; initial sin and subsequent sin. And as the Creed began with life, God the Father the giver of natural life, so it ends with life. That is the most important thing for creatures like us.

> "Whatever presses, sorrow saith,
> No life that lives with living breath
> Hath ever truly longed for death.
> 'Tis life of which our nerves are scant,
> 'Tis life not death for which we pant,
> More life and fuller that we want."

And so our Apostles' Creed—the creed of joy ends not with the death everlasting, but with the life everlasting; not with the death which has no life, but with the life which has no death.

Now, let me just add this. Does any one here present really believe in the first article of the Apostles' Creed? Do you believe in God the Father Almighty? Then, if you do, why should you refuse to believe in the life everlasting, and even in the resurrection of the body? Yes, if God brought out human life from a long succession of lower forms, if He brought man in any way to his present condition, do we suppose that He who made such a work, so wonderful, so Divine as it is, will fling it away? If He is our Father, if He is the Father Almighty, can we not trust ourselves with Him in the darkness of the grave, and believe in the life everlasting? A writer of great power in the present day has put it in this way: He bids us think of some brother or sister perhaps whom we ourselves have known, and after those first years of affection at home the brother at last is called by the exigencies of life to go away upon service to some distant place, say to India. The relation of brother and sister is not broken by the separation. It continues. There pass from one to the other, from shore to shore, the letters and the watchwords of a deepening love. And then there comes for the absent brother a longer voyage and a longer separation. Disease strikes him down. He is sent up to the hills, and he falls by a shot from some of the wild hillsmen, and he returns not again home. Has the relation ceased between the two?

His image, as the writer says to whom I have referred, may grow paler with years, but she sees him through all her sorrows and all her joys, haloed with a diviner light. The relation is only partially suspended. If it were otherwise, our nature would have spiritual intensities which would run utterly to waste, and the deeply passionate love of the heart of men and women would be frozen upon the Iceland of death. So that, if we believe in God the Father Almighty, then the belief in the life everlasting, ay, and in the resurrection of the body, are necessary. And so this Creed, this Creed of the fatherhood of God, this Creed of the Divine facts about Jesus Christ our Lord, this Creed of the Holy Ghost, this Creed of the Holy Catholic Church, of the forgiveness of sins, of the life everlasting, is it not a creed of sunshine as well as a creed of fact?

Such, my brethren, seems to be the character of the Apostles' Creed. Should we not endeavour to make it to ourselves, then, a living thing? The Creed has been spoken of as a rope, which fastens and binds the churches of the earth and the hearts of men together. Ask any man who has been on an Arctic expedition, and he will tell you that a frozen rope, however strong, is one of the most brittle and easily broken things that can possibly be. It can be broken like a block of glass. A petrified creed! Now, petrifaction, in nature at all events, is antiseptic; but in the moral and spiritual world a petrified dogma, a petrified truth, becomes something very different from that. In that sphere petrifaction becomes putrefaction. Here, then, I think, is the great lesson from the

Apostles' Creed—faith in an eternal person, not merely in doctrines about Him. We want an unchanging creed. What may be called metaphysical Christian communions are perpetually tinkering at their confessions—I can only use that word for it—and drawing up new creeds. The true creed is eternal because Christ is eternal, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Creeds of mind, creeds of feeling are the most unsatisfactory of all tests. How often are we bishops told with regard to our confirmation service that the question in it is a very unsatisfactory one, and we have question after question proposed as a substitute. "Have I found peace?" "Am I saved?" "Do I love Jesus?" "Have I found Christ?" "Have I found peace?" Peace is one of the most blessed gifts of the Holy Spirit of God; but it is not our feeling of peace that extorts grace from God. Nowhere in the apostolic salutations do you find "Peace and grace." You always find "Grace and peace." The theology that puts peace before grace is a topsy-turvy sort of theology. "Do I love Christ?" Blessed is it for the heart which can truly answer that question; but it is not a question to be rudely and suddenly put by any one human being to another. Who does not know of the way in which the great dramatist, the great reader of human nature, describes that poor bereaved old king? He asks his daughters which of them loves him most and how they love him. Two of the number heap up epithet upon epithet, they almost exhaust human language in their hyperboles, probably not altogether hypocritical. But who is it that proves her love best in the issue of the matter?

Witness that marvellous scene where the old white-haired man stands out, and has to abide the pelting of the pitiless storm. She who really loves him best is the one who said least about it. And as to asking children the question whether they have found Christ, I would much rather say to them, "Whether or not you have found Christ, I am sure that Christ has found you."

To rely upon these things is to rely upon bodily conditions, upon what may be called nerve-storms. When we walk under the pale sky amongst the discoloured leaves, when we feel with holy Job that we are made to possess the sins of our youth and that God writes bitter things against us, when the spiritual outlook is tinged by the natural, oh, then, for these words to come home to us again and again with power—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

I read not long ago a remarkable book in which the writer said that he had often, in the course of a ministry in London, met with people who told him that their feeling of Christ's sympathy was destroyed to them by His being of one age. It seemed to them that a man of a different age could not possibly be in full accord with them. What! I ask whether all that is best and noblest in humanity, nay, I might ask whether all that is worst and most degraded, does not speak to our human hearts across the gulf of ages? The passionate lines of Ovid, the inscriptions and pictures upon the walls of Pompeii do their evil work still, and on the better side there are times when the air becomes electric with the intensity of the

thoughts of the dead, and their life lives again in a new generation. Art, with all that it has done for Christianity, perhaps leaves one mistaken impression upon many minds. Christ is not dead. He liveth for ever and ever. There are probably few of us who would agree with the great historian of Latin Christianity, when he says that the painted crucifix is one of the most revolting objects that ever was presented to the adoration of mankind. But, my friends, the crucifix, however pathetic and affecting it may be, the crucifix is not all: Christ is not dead, He liveth. Light and life leap from the immovability of the carven wood, and the presence of Christ fills heaven with blue and the Church with song. Christ speaks to us for ever because He is eternal, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Now, last of all, in the visitation of the sick the minister of religion is directed, if necessary, to repeat the Apostles' Creed and to ask the sick or dying Christian about his belief in it. I do not know that what are called anecdotes from the pulpit are always desirable, they are so often either absolutely false, or at all events exaggerated. But I may tell you one which I have every reason to believe to have been true. Not very many months since there was a dying child,—one of those children whose premature genius seems to announce that they must soon pass through one dark gate. When that child at six or seven years of age was slowly dying, he began to feel that which many who are older will no doubt feel. He felt the icy touch of death. He felt that darkness which begins to gather round the human spirit which

must pass into the world beyond the grave. Those who hung with affection over the child's bed suggested their different thoughts and prayers, but the little boy at last said, "Let me just say my Creed." And when the little one, with his hands feebly clasped, had repeated the Creed, he said, "I am not afraid any more." And we, many of us white-headed children of the sons of men, we who have so long been in this world of ours, we who have spoken so much about death, have we no lesson to learn from that? Would it not be well for us, if in the spirit of that little child we were enabled to say our Creed, and to add at the close of it, "I am not afraid now"?

Yes, the Apostles' Creed is a creed of sunshine and it is a creed of adamant; and it would not be the one if it were not the other. It would not be a creed of sunshine if it were not a creed of adamant, an eternal creed, because its great subject, Jesus Christ, is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

# THE RASHNESS AND DULNESS OF OUR LIVES.

By the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Ripon.*

"Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord."—Jer. xxxii. 8.

WE have often heard it said that time is no agent; but, if time be no agent, certainly time is a revealer of secrets; and it is a revealer of secrets which very often rebukes alike the rashness and also the dulness of our lives. We have only to remember that time, bringing to light "the hidden things of darkness," reveals, not only those things which the wickedness of man would fain keep secret, but also those disastrous mistakes which have arisen out of the weakness of men, and which have been the result of their dulness of apprehension. No person who understands, and still less he who values, life as a sacred and inalienable opportunity of doing something for the world before he dies, but has often wished that he could overleap the bounds of the present and understand what the result of his action shall be, so that, with the larger experience of the future, he might go the better armed against the per-

* A sermon preached in Westminster Abbey, on Sunday evening, July 19th, 1891.

plexing problems and conditions of duty which beset him in the present. If only we had the education which will come in the future, how we should be protected against the mistakes of the present! And thus we feel a certain impatience against time. We know that time lies in wait to expose before long the blunders which we have made, and we only wish that we could so forestall time with the possession of a larger prudence as to prevent the future getting the opportunity of declaring "Thus you acted, and thus you failed: if with more prudence you had acted otherwise, thus and thus would have been the brilliance of your success."

Now, I would ask you to notice that the incident connected with the words that I have read, and which is recorded in the chapter read as the lesson for this evening's service, suggests to us exactly that thought of the way in which time may rebuke our rashness and rebuke also our dulness. The incident which is recorded is a very simple one, but it is suggestive and significant. A cousin of the prophet's was the owner of certain land which lay outside the city. The city at that time was beleaguered by the Babylonish armies. Many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were pressed probably for want of money, because the bitterness of the siege and the length of the war had exhausted their resources; and many more there were who were ready enough to part with such property as they possessed for any price which a purchaser might offer, when the very land and property which they owned was already swallowed up, so to speak, by the invading hosts. A certain sort of dream, as

we might call it, passed through the mind of Jeremiah, then in close imprisonment because of the jealous anger of the king. Whatever else he was, he was a Jew at heart, and he had that capacity which was singularly, I suppose, possessed by the Jew—the tenacious love of the soil which gave him birth. It was a joy for him to think that the land which was given by God to his forefathers belonged in succession of family inheritance to his own kinsmen of that day; and the dream crossed his mind that perchance that moment might come when he would have the opportunity of becoming the possessor of his ancestral heritage. That was his thought. It came to him as a dream; he describes it afterwards as the direction of the word of the Lord coming to him. But it was not, I imagine, realised as the word of God at the first moment of its approach: it was only a later circumstance—an actual incident which occurred in his life—which enabled him to see that the first suggested thought was, indeed, the word of the Lord. For he had thought of it, and a while afterwards his cousin Hanameel came with the absolute proposal on his lips that Jeremiah should purchase the family property in Anathoth. Then when he saw fulfilled in fact the very thought which had passed through his mind, when that which he had dreamed of had become a realised possibility in his life—"then," he said, "I knew that this was the word of the Lord." In other words, it was only the light of after circumstances which flashed upon his mind the significance of the early suggestion. He might have left it as a mere suggestion, he might have lived his life, as

many of us have lived our lives, with the possession of a dream which we never for a moment imagined could possibly be realised. But here at his very door, here at the gate of the prison, is the very man of whom he dreamed coming and making to him the offer which he dreamed. Then he said, "When, thus translated into fact, my dream came before me once more, I knew that it was the word of the Lord."

Now, the first thought which naturally arises from a thing like that is this. We may act upon our first impressions, our impressions may be very strong, and they may be ready to link themselves with our natural ambitions, but it is not every impression that is the word of light, still less the word of the Lord. Religion divides itself very often, if we were to classify it, into two kinds, or two families or types. It has often been made the subject of mere mental impressions. The presence of the Spirit, the consciousness of a spirit working within, that has been emphasised to such a degree that at last men, driven by their impulse or suggestion of some passing impression, have committed deeds of violence and wrong which the common conscience of humanity condemns. That is to say, early impressions, strong impressions, even impressions which jump with the spirit of what we believe to be right, impressions which wed themselves to our darling dreams, however much they may justify themselves by the exercise of our imaginative conscience, are not in themselves to be accepted as truly Divine suggestions. We must wait for the light of other circumstances. This is exactly that balance which protects us from what I may call the fanaticism of

faith, and turns our faith into the faith of a living prudence. If every suggestion which passes through the mind of men, however splendid it might be, however it might dazzle their fancy, was therefore, because it was splendid and because it was congenial, exactly to be followed, we should have the confusion of the world worse confounded, and disorder would march behind the advancing ranks of religion. No; subjective impressions must be verified by outward opportunities. If a man thinks that he is called of God to do this thing or the other, it is wise that he should distrust his own impression till he sees the providential circumstances in his life so open as to be the seconding call of providence emphasising the original suggestion within. Authority in religion is never on the one side or the other; authority is never wholly within, nor yet wholly without. If it is wholly within, it is open to the declaration of being a mere subjective impression; if it is wholly without, it lays no weight upon the spiritual nature of man, and receives no response from his conscience. But, when there comes to us this which, on the one hand, links itself with our inner nature, and by its own commanding presence makes us feel that it is true, and brings to it also the verifying evidence of providential opportunity—then duty leaps up and can draw her sword, because she knows that she is not the victim of a passing impression alone, but that two things, the law without and the law within, have been combining within his life—then he may know that this also is the word of the Lord.

But if, on the one side, an incident like this may

be taken to rebuke the rash impulsiveness of men who would act upon their own subjective impressions, it also, and I think still more strikingly, witnesses against our dulness, which fails to perceive the true significance of the incidents of life as they occur. It was an impression on Jeremiah's mind, and it was only afterwards, when the light of that later circumstance of Hanameel's visit occurred, that he perceived its full significance. "Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord." Now mark that this experience is very true in our ordinary life. How often it happens that we have failed to realise the full value of our opportunities till later circumstances flash new light on their meaning! To take the simplest illustration which might come to our minds, you are in the midst of a crowd; you are anxiously looking out because it is a crowd where many of the celebrities of life are gathered; and after you have passed some one suddenly says to you, "Did you see him?" and immediately there flashes upon you the thought, you have been close to one whose name you have heard, whose works perchance you have read, of whom you have had the greatest desire to have some knowledge. Just then the after circumstance of the utterance of your friend flashes upon you the true meaning of this: you have been close to that greatness which you have worshipped, you have missed the opportunity. Or there are incidents in your own life. Have you never had some friend who in early life was your familiar companion? You played with him, studied the same tasks with him; and now life has diverged, and he has risen to greatness, and we remain where we were

on the commonplace level of life. People meet us and say, "You knew him; tell me some incidents of his early life." But now the dimness of the past comes upon your memory, and all the anecdotes have dropped away; the multitude of other affairs has obscured your recollection. But then, by the light of this after greatness, you know you have been by the side of one who was possessed of conspicuous genius, one of whom you would say, "Would that I had husbanded those stories of the past; would that I had observed him, for his life would have a further meaning to me had I been one who had noted carefully the characteristics, the features of his talent, of his life." In other words, later circumstances are constantly forcing upon us the dulness with which we have confronted the incidents of life as they have occurred. And surely that is the common witness of history. What is the history of all human progress? What is the history of literary life? Not in our lives only is it true that it is the later events which flash upon us the true meaning and significance of things. The great mass of mankind have failed to recognise the greatness among them, the opportunities amongst them, till the world has discovered the greatness; and then our recollection is forced reluctantly and remorsefully back into the past, and we say, "Would we had observed it and cherished it!" "Who killed John Keats?" has often been asked. To the men of his day he was but a raw youth, full of a kind of rude desire for poetic fame; but now we recognise the genius which lay there; we go back and say how true it is that the men of their day failed to recognise the

glory of these men, have persecuted them, and let them starve, and afterwards have built their monuments. Butler shall live, and toil, and starve, but we shall give him a stone when he has needed bread. Later circumstances reveal to us the dulness which fails to recognise the opportunities of life.

And, if it is true with regard to men of letters, it is also true with regard to leaders of great movements. We are often disposed to imagine, because we recognise the greatness of great names of the past, therefore the men of their day were far more to blame than we are in that they did not recognise them ; but we may be doing exactly the same thing ourselves. The men were not labelled and known as great in their day. Anybody can recognise greatness when it is pointed out to him and explained ; anybody can understand a duty when he sees that the whole world is openly enthusiastic in the doing of it. After all, what we want is the spirit that can perceive before others do it, while we ourselves have the opportunity —the spirit which can perceive the opportunity which is at our door. Moses was not great to the men of his day. He was but the interloper, busybodying himself about things with which he had no concern— " Who made thee a ruler and a judge ? "—and yet we say that this man whom they reject is the lawgiver, is the emphasised lawgiver in the history of Israel.

And it is the same in the Christian age. We talk of " the great Athanasius," but he is great now because later ages have discovered his greatness. But to the men of his day he was only as a little pestilent fellow, who would be insisting on his own way of thought,

a troubler of the Israel of his day, a man of whom they would say, "Let us get rid of him, if we can." We say, "How dull these men were not to see the mightiness of the mighty Athanasius!" Later developments of life, later and larger growths of means of thought, have shed light upon the man, and now we see how great he was. They missed him, the men of that day!

It is the same in the history of our Lord. You are not surprised that the same thing should be fulfilled in His life who was in all points as we are—tempted, yet without sin. The experience with which Christ's life is charged is precisely the same: they saw no beauty in Him. We say, "If we had lived in those days our hand would not have been lifted up against that sacred life, we should have torn the crown of thorns from His brow, we should have welcomed His mission, we should have adored Him, we should have worshipped His feet." But the men of that day did not see the beauty that they should desire Him. "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil," were the words with which He was greeted. John the Baptist pointed out their dulness—"There standeth One among you whom ye know not"; and though the Baptist was unworthy to loose His shoes from His feet, He moved among them. He was but the Man of Sorrows, and He was the Galilean Teacher, who at best had power to sway the ignorant crowd, and they took Him with cruel hands and hanged Him on the cross. But we forget that this may be true in us. Even in our midst Christ stands, and we fail to recognise Him. How often there has been the

dream that He might live, and go in and out amongst us; but we should say, "Yet there is nothing very remarkable in this Man. He does not impress us as having more than the ordinary power—not greater spiritual force, perchance." And we might, indeed, not crucify Him and slay Him; we might accept Him as the lion of a season, and set at naught His counsels, and refuse His commands.

Why is it we are perpetually visiting with our severe criticism the dulness of the past, when we may be dull ourselves—dull to duty, dull to opportunity, dull to the meaning of the age in which we are living, dull to the very call of God, dull to the presence of Christ. Every duty, every opportunity of kindness, every incident of our life, if we are alive to see it in its brighter light, in its true significance, would never be deemed to be trivial and insignificant at all. It is because we are dull that we say, "This is of no matter, this is of no moment." We elbow our way through the crowd of life, roughly heedless of our brother men, scarcely stopping to think whether we have put our brother to inconvenience; we thrust ourselves between him and the sight which his eyes are longing to see; we may have been obscuring Heaven's light from him. We do not see that these things, these dull incidents, these trivial commonplace events, may be, in the light of some larger future, charged with a deep meaning; and our sense of responsibility will leap up when we realise that what we refused, what we turned away from and rejected, was not a commonplace incident, but a Divine call, the presence of a noble and Heaven-given opportunity.

Only the sale of a bit of land, and yet it was the word of the Lord! Only a duty which you should have done yesterday, only the effort to deal liberally by the appeal which is made to you to-day, only the determination to master the meaning of some social question in order that you may clearly understand your duty, only that you should try to grasp the situation of life and understand where your responsibilities lie! "Commonplace things these!" "Give us noble duties," you say, "that are charged with the presence of God. If God came and told us to do this thing, if the light of Heaven fell upon it, and we saw it radiant with the smile of God, how eagerly we would do it!" But this is commonplace—the duty in the home; setting a higher example in the moral tone and conversation in the midst of society which may be losing its claim and grasp on moral ideas; these commonplace duties springing up in home life—we do not see their significance. When we begin to see light, when the light shall flash upon it, when the grave is opening upon us, this very flash of the circumstance which we call death may shine so back upon the trivial incidents of our life, that we shall realise for the first time that those commonplace things, those duties which I shirked, those things from which I turned away, thinking them of no moment at all—those also were the word of the Lord.

May I, then, for a moment ask you to observe the application of that truth, that time reveals to us our dulness in relation to certain aspects of our life?

First, the circumstance of the *presence* of God. We

are often disposed to say that our lot in the nineteenth century is cast in what we may call unfavourable circumstances for faith. Splendid miracles no longer happen. Who is amongst us to raise the dead? We have no Moses to cleave the Red Sea asunder. We have no vision of prophets in the fire, who mount up on chariots of flame and disappear in the open heaven. Give us these things. Yes, it is true we have changed. We do not live in an age of special and startling interventions of the Divine providence; but may we not for all that be living in an age in which the presence of the Lord, though no longer manifested by stately and striking manifestations, is calmly, persistently, daily evidenced? The men who went through the wilderness ate of the bread which came down from heaven; they crossed the Jordan, and they ate of the corn of the land. Were they, do you think, unwise enough to say?—"When we had the manna, in the wilderness which descended before our eyes from heaven, we had the witness of the real presence of God amongst us; but now that we have crossed the Jordan we reap down the corn of the land which grew and which heathen hands have planted; we are no longer fed from heaven; the presence of God has disappeared." Would they not rather feel that the corn of the land was sweet to their taste, that now at last they were eating the natural crops of sweet earth which was God's earth still? Does the perpetuity of a blessing, the constancy of a blessing, make it less God's blessing?

Are we to await something that shall reveal that it is God indeed? May not the presence of God be

as real amongst the ordinary conventional aspects of our daily life—in the sun that rises and sets, in the harvests that are sown and reaped, in life baptized in the presence of God, lived by His providence in the opportunities of daily duty—may not God be present in all these? And may it not be also that the hour might come upon us when the light from some new combination of circumstances might so flash upon our present or our past life as to reveal to us "God was there indeed"? Many and many a man has lived, like the patriarch, in the belief that only within his own tented home where his pious father dwelt was the presence of God manifested, only where the home-altar was set would the Divine presence come to bless. But out on the lone hillside, with the bleak chalk ranges all about him, with heaven above his head set with the light of stars, there he can wake up, and the circumstances of life flash across him their true significance: "This which I thought the desert is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Later circumstances may flash upon us this, that we who imagined that we were living in an age in which the presence of God was an unreality could at last discover, in a light which shall be an unchallenged revelation to our souls, that God has been "about our path and about our bed, and spying out all our ways."

Or take it with regard to what we may call the *providential circumstances of life.* Have you never felt that your burden in life is a larger one to bear than your neighbour's? Few amongst us have not had experience which has made us thirst to change

our lot with that of others. We think that others who go cheerily through the world have less affliction than we ; we wish we could change with them. But suppose—may I for a moment give you this one significant *if* as the hypothesis of my thought?—if the Lord Almighty did meet you, Who understands exactly the conditions of flesh and blood, Who knows those special conditions which you have inherited through the long succession of your ancestors, if He were to come to you and say : "I am about to bring upon you this sorrow—you will lose pecuniarily, or you shall have this illness, or that true one shall be swept from your side ; I ask you to bear for My sake, My child, this burden ; if that measure your strength, I know exactly what you can bear ; and I know also the sweet and the glorious bounty of grace which shall come to you in the bearing of it." Not one amongst us with the face of God's strength looking into ours, and the smile of God encouraging us to patience and fortitude, would ever bear to shrink from the burden ; we would gird up the loins of our nature to bear whatever it was—sorrow, bereavement, loss. But that which we would do if God so spake to us is surely that which we might have the faith to do—seeing that later circumstances may just flash upon us this revelation—" It was God, indeed, who brought that burden upon me." That loss, that bereavement, that sickness—they were brought by the loving hand of God, who sought to help you through the discipline of life into a better and truer faith and spirit. Ah! if you would do it, and bear it cheerfully and believe in its beneficence to you, if God were so visibly

revealed to you and spoke, why is it that you, knowing that your life will be one day made plain, take up the cross grudgingly, murmuringly, with discontent, with dissatisfaction and distress, and do not remember—for this is the very law by which we live —that only the after life and the after circumstances will reveal to you the full meaning of the discipline and the sorrows of your life? "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." If such a spirit were ours, then, even when the loss and the sorrow, the death and the privation came, we should say of them, "This also is the word of the Lord."

Lastly, I would ask you to see the light which that thought throws upon the suggestions of *duty*—duty, stern daughter of the voice of God.

If that has any meaning, it has a claim upon your life and mine. But what I ask you to observe is this. We never realise the splendour and the significance of the duties which are laid upon us, when measured by our own small life; they seem so trifling. Look for a moment at the prophet. That which he did might, from one standpoint, be said to be merely the desire of a man to possess some landed property, merely the wish of a man that he may be in the possession of his ancestral heritage; but when the opportunity came he said, "This suggestion is the word of the Lord." For his action was no longer a commercial action done between himself and his kinsman; it became then a great action, typical, representative, manifesting to Israel the real attitude of strength with which Israel should confront its

dangers. That which was at first sight a mere action of trade and commerce, the buying of a bit of land, became a splendid action of noble patriotism, of great and majestic heroism. Remember, Jeremiah's action becomes of more significance, because he was regarded by the men of his day as a pessimist in public affairs. He said: "Your resistance of the enemy is absolutely hopeless; the Chaldeans will be here, the Babylonish armies will occupy this city, and your king shall be taken into captivity." He believed absolutely that the fate of Jerusalem was at hand. He had not the slightest doubt in his own mind that the sins of the people had so morally and so physically weakened them that their power of resistance had gone, and that it was only through the avenue of the bitter discipline of exile they could resume their power of national life; and so, as a pessimist—mark!—as one who believed that the fate of Jerusalem was sealed, and that the armies would soon be within the walls, and that captivity would inevitably follow—that is the man who says, "I am ready to lay down my money and purchase the field outside the gates of the city, because I have this pledge—I know that the enemy will come in, but I know also that there is an absolute security for this soil of Israel, the soil which the Lord God gave to Israel of old; though I see nothing before us but the dark avenue of captivity, though I see our path is beset with the hostility of the enemy and the overthrow of our city, still I know that path will emerge into an ultimate place of joy, when God shall spread the banquet once more for His people, and the land which has been captured

shall be restored, and Israel's position shall be eternalised." In other words, he looks right forward and sees the splendour of his mission, which was to cry to the people: "Though I have said to you that the neglect of Jerusalem shall not be pardoned, and only wiped out by this bitter discipline, never, never despair of Israel." Like the old Roman, it was the purchase of the land while the enemy was in possession which gave dignity to his action. The Roman by his action said, "Though the enemy be at the gates, I do not despair of the welfare of the republic." Jeremiah's action said more: "I do not believe that one rood of the sacred soil shall ever permanently be in the possession of the enemies of God"; and it was the splendour therefore, the significance, of the action which was flashed upon him at the moment when the opportunity of the purchase came; and that which was once a dream is become a reality. And he could therefore prove to the people the reality of his faith in the hope and in the destiny of Israel. The meaning and the significance of that action none of his countrymen could gainsay, because he was ready to venture his money. That is the spirit of it.

Every duty costs something: it costs some trouble, some pains, some thought, some money. Duty, whatever is in your life, is not always an easy thing, unless your nature has been celestialised, and duty has become a delight. But that, after all, belongs rather to the higher levels of life than that commonly apportioned to humankind. Would duty be less noble if duty were easy? Is it not precisely because

the steep up which you climb is rocky ; because you must sometimes fall, and climb on hands and knees ere you can get to the height where the light of God is shining ; because it means the expenditure of fame, money—whatever it is ; because the duty is shirked —that therefore the duty is noble ? It does cost something ; and the man who talks glibly about duty, but is never ready to pay the price of his duty, to purchase his duty by the laying down of some present price, either of money or of time—that man, whatever else he may say, does not believe in the splendid imperative of duty, he does not believe in the voice of God behind it. Oh yes ! if thoughts have crossed your mind, dimly perhaps, and then in some moments of generous dreaming, when you have imagined what your life might be, and you have seen yourself mounting higher and yet higher on the path of duty, and with bleeding hands clinging on to the duty which you know is yours ; some great call in the people's welfare, where you must meet with some unpopularity ; some duty in the home which means the sacrifice of yourself, perhaps the humiliation of your pride—because you are obliged to make little changes in the home, and you fear the half-suppressed smiles of the children or the servants—whatever be the aspect of it, remember this : when the opportunity comes, when it stands and confronts you, not in the glamoured light of your own dreams, but in the dry light of duty to be done, then, are you ready to pay the price ? If not you are the dreamer of duty and not the doer of it ; and the hour may come when you will say, " That was my opportunity, but now

it stands and looks upon me with that great reproach as a duty which once confronted me, but which I turned my back upon." Every duty done is like the thread which leads through the labyrinth of life, and explains for you at last the secret meaning of it within. Each day's duty, the suggestion, the commonplace thing which you thought hardly worth the doing, is like the silken thread which is linked to yet a coarser one, which links itself again to the stronger rope, and at last draws the great force of your life after it. So is every suggestion, and afterwards you perceive that that passing suggestion was indeed the word of the Lord.

Then what shall I say in conclusion? This much. If I want now to correct the dulness of my eyesight and be illumined by that light which will enable me to perceive that the Divine light is there, which will enable me to hear in every call the voice of the Lord, what shall be my best means of achieving this? Let the past illumine the present; go back on your life and observe it. You now can perceive exactly where it was you missed your way, because you now know that, if you had done this or omitted to do that, if you had not been the victim of that delusion, you would have been in a different position. You see now that that voice at your side was indeed the voice of the Lord. Let the past illumine the present. Do not treat duties as trivial and commonplace, because as your present life illuminates your past life and shows you how God's voice has been in it, so the future may illuminate the duties which appeal to you to-day. We often say that the dead

are canonised in our memory. When they pass away with their greatness, they seem to move from the crowd of men and march with stately steps, and take their place in the great banquet-halls of those whom memory holds illustrious and dear; and from out those banquet-halls they look down with eyes brimming with reproach, because we do not value them as we might. So our duties, canonised by the light which the present throws upon them, march stately before us; they take their place high above, and there are reproaches in their eyes; and the future will have reproaches like this, if we do not perceive the voice of the Lord at our side. The real thing which dims our eyes is the limited light we bring, measuring all the incidents of life by self. We take our little guttering farthing candle to our work-room, and we see everything with this. We cannot see the stitches, and we dread the shadows that move and flicker, the shadows which the gaunt light of the room casts in every direction. Bring in the larger light. Why, that old Roman brought in the larger light, when he saw in the purchase of the land not his own private gain, but the welfare of the republic. He saw his duty in the larger light of the well-being of the men and women about him. Let in the light of other men's interests, let in the light of the welfare of those about you, and then you cannot say that the duties are insignificant, then their voice will be to you the voice of humanity's need, and you will see a dignity in obeying it. Look upon every action of your life, not in relation to self or to the men and women about you, but in relation to God. Let in

that larger light. Then every action of yours has its transcendent significance; then His Divine voice appeals to you; then you say, "Every habit I contract, every word I speak, every opportunity I miss, may be a Divine opportunity slighted, the Divine voice turned back upon."

# FIFTY SERMON OUTLINES.

## THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL.

By the Ven. F. W. Farrar, D.D., F.R.S.

*Preached in Westminster Abbey, January* 4, 1891.

"A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke ii. 11.

In this text you have the inmost message of the gospel, disencumbered of all details and developments. By Saviour we mean rescuer; not only so, but preserver; not only redeemer, but sanctifier; not only "He redeemeth my soul," but also "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." This word involves the highest of all blessings in its most comprehensive form. If we have grasped it and learned to live in the light of it, we have attained the highest, richest hope and object of life.

I.—The universal and the individual need that we all have of a Saviour. Even the heathen felt it, and embodied it in their unconscious prophecies. From Seneca was wrung the confession that man cannot save himself. Witness the helpless sufferings of the animal creation, witness the social evils of our day, witness the hard reality of death to which all are passing.

II.—We have "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Sin is the one poisonous tap root of all misery and degradation. Christ came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

## CAINITES AND ABELITES.

By the Rev. John McNeill.

*Regent Square Presbyterian Church.*

"And she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord."—Gen. iv. 1, 2.

I.—The home scene. "Eve conceived and bare Cain, and she again bare his brother Abel." Cain means a gift, but Abel means vanity. Parents should make their children equal—and have no favourites. Let us beware of that evil thing. Murder and madness are in the same chapter with that evil egg, which only needs to be hatched by the devil.

II.—A working-day scene. They have grown up. Cain got the gentleman's job. Any job would do for Abel. Notice that they were both working men. When the Creator became a man He became a working man. He was a carpenter before He turned Dissenting minister. What a dignity lies here! Fulness of idleness and fulness of bread produce Sodom from age to age.

III.—A Sabbath-day scene. The main idea here is the great difference between them, and the cause of the difference is God. The thing that differentiates you is—How do you worship God? Worship, since the beginning and on to the end of time, divides the worshippers into two great denominations—Cainites and Abelites. Cainites say, "We have no sin, but we acknowledge we are Thy creatures." Abelites say, "True; but on one side there is guilt and rebellion and sin, and there must be the shedding of blood for remission." Let us come by the way of the blood, coming with more confidence than trembling Abel could come. Even as the blood by which I come to God speaketh better things than that of Abel.

## THE BLESSEDNESS OF GIVING.

By the Rev. Harry Jones, M.A.

*Preached at St. Philip's, Regent Street, January* 11.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—Acts xx. 35.

These words have been saved out of the thousand unrecorded sentences of Jesus, and appear to have been familiar to the Ephesians.

I.—There *is* a blessedness in the receiving of worldly gifts,—when they come directly from God (light, heat, rain), or when they come from man.

II.—It is *more* blessed to give than to receive. He who gives as Christ would have him give, without a thought of praise from men, is in touch with God, and breathes a Divine atmosphere which brings strength and sweetness to his soul. We must never forget that we are of kin to God, the great Giver. As a man has the Christ-spirit, he stands to the weary and heavy laden of this world in the position of a giver rather than receiver.

This God-like attitude requires no store of this world's goods. There are those who, having nothing, yet possessing all things, can bestow treasures of compassion, sympathy, appreciation and love on their fellows.

## GEHAZI.

By the Rev. W. W. Merry, D.D., Rector of Lincoln College.

*Preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, January* 18.

"Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, said," etc.—2 Kings v. 20.

I.—Gehazi is the representative of a certain type of character. As Solomon stands to us for the sage, and Daniel for

the righteous judge, so does Gehazi stand for the liar. A lie is an exposure of character. It is the deep-seated covetousness of Gehazi that is emphasised. He was determined to get for himself something that belonged to Naaman. He got it; for the leprosy of Naaman was to cleave to him and to his seed for ever.

II.—Gehazi was one who made shipwreck of great chances. He was "the servant of Elisha"—that is, he was looked upon as the successor designate of the Prophet. He belonged to very serious times, and never realised their importance. He had the great example of his master before his eyes, and had wholly missed its significance. Elisha was his paymaster and nothing more.

III.—Gehazi's error has its faithful copyists still. Hidden under fair names, the sordid, selfish spirit works within us. We are called servants of God and soldiers of Christ. It is our redemption by Jesus that has in it the secret of every stimulus and every check, if we faithfully remember that "we are not our own," and so bound "to glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's."

## MOTIVES.

By the Rev. Canon Scott-Holland, M.A.

*Preached at Great St. Mary's Church, January* 18.

"Our God is a consuming fire."—Heb. xii. 29.

My general subject is that of motives. What motive is set before us in the New Testament as the highest and and strongest? Religious motives are either selfish—the hope of heaven and the fear of hell; or ethical—hatred of sin or the desire of goodness; or spiritual—the love of God and the fear of God. The first two are not continuously operative—the last is usually recognised by the soul and is highly operative.

Faithful service is inseparable from godly motives. If we have not such, there will result the following: (1) we shall seek to satisfy ourselves rather than to please God; (2) we shall look to the quality of our work rather than the reality of our service; (3) we shall be restless rather than stedfast.

I.—In God's council what weight is given to fear as producing holiness? Out of thirty parables eleven only are stern, and only seventeen scattered sayings of our Lord appeal to fear (putting aside Christ's denunciations of the Pharisees as being special). The Epistles contain fewer sentences of a threatening character than the Gospels.

II.—What weight is given to hope of reward? The hope of heaven is (1) feeble, (2) unworthy, (3) prejudicial.

III.—The love of Christ constraineth us. This motive is irresistible.

## SAVING FAITH.

By the Ven. F. W. Farrar, D.D.

*Preached in Westminster Abbey, January* 18.

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"—Acts xvi. 30.

What does the word "saved" mean?

I.—In the first sense it means we have all been purchased with Christ's precious blood.

II.—It means that we are rescued from, snatched as brands from burning.

III.—It means that we have proved the sincerity of our salvation.

Two things are indispensable to salvation, both of which are involved in every real faith in Jesus Christ. They are repentance and godliness. A single spasm of repentance is not enough. True repentance is a course, a continuance in well-doing. The work of salvation is a lifelong effort, and a warfare that has no discharge.

## TO-MORROW WE DIE.

By the Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D.

*Preached in City Temple.*

"What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die."—1 Cor. xv. 32.

Under every light and every relation this would be false and superficial reasoning. It is always better to be spiritual than to be carnal.

I.—It is false reasoning, because it does not take a right view of the nature of the very body doomed to so-called destruction. Man is not all body, and he knows it. It is that other quantity that troubles the calculation. Life is larger than the body. It is this overness of life that Christ wants to redeem and purify.

II.—Let us eat and drink. Where is the food? who will find the wine? We were going to eat and drink and die, and we can find nothing at all to eat and drink without sitting down and thinking. That destroys the theory: the thinking cannot eat and drink and die.

Blessed is the Christian hope—it abolishes death. Hear the sweet speaker: "He that believeth on Me shall never die."

## "THEY HAVE NO WINE."

By the Rev. Canon Scott-Holland.

*Preached at St. Paul's Cathedral, January* 18.

"The mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine."—John ii. 3-5.

St. John loves to show how words and acts, in themselves casual and unconscious, are possessed by the higher spirit of prophecy.

I.—The Virgin's words. They appear to be but the

natural expression of a kindly sensitiveness, distressed at a temporary difficulty; but, like a pebble thrown into a pool, it awakes a movement from the depth of the Lord's being, and the very secret of His mission is laid open.

Why should hers be the voice to hasten that hour which will have terror as well as glory in it? He cannot hear the plea and not respond to it, and yet the pity which arises to meet the need will only complete its gift when it has given its very blood for wine.

II.—"They have no wine." That is also the very heart complaint with which we are now beseeching the compassion of Jesus. Entire masses of our population have been discovered to be in that plight. Everything in nature, though toil for food be our lot, is also given its opportunity of joy. It cannot be God's will that so many lead such joyless existences. This growth of a social conscience answering to the sensitive impulse of pity is full of hope. Listen to the inquiring voice of the Church which whispers, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

## THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.

By the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A.

*Preached in Allen Street Church, Kensington, January 25.*

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat."—Gen. ii. 16, 17.

"Sin is the transgression of the law." So wrote the great Apostle, and the definition stands. The theory that there is no sin has been revived in these latter times. If religious fatalism is dead, scientific fatalism does not lack its prophets. We are told that environment is everything. Man is the child of fate. Eve's act was the inevitable sequence of cause and effect. The story of Eden shows the supremacy of Nature, not the fall of Man.

I.—The moral nature of man is a special communication of God. He has given the law, because He has likewise given will and power to accept or reject the right.

II.—How has the will of God been revealed to man? In this chapter of Genesis revelation is represented as being of two kinds—inward and outward. The Divine "Thou shalt not" is written in the very nature of men. Every conscience has certain broad lines of right and wrong.

God has given us the Great Pattern Life of His Son Jesus, and our knowledge of Him is at once our matchless nspiration and the measure of our shortcoming.

## CHRIST'S TRIUMPH.

By the Ven. F. W. Farrar, D.D.

*Preached in Westminster Abbey, February* 1.

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ."—2 Cor. ii. 14.

There was little of earthly triumph in St. Paul's career. His was the faith triumphant in the midst of failure, which is better than self-congratulation on any visible results. The imagery he employs is that of a Roman triumph. He knew that when a Roman conqueror walked in triumph, incense was always burned along the streets. It was "an odour of life unto life" to the victor, but "of death unto death" to the captives. Before the car of the conqueror climbed the Capitol those unhappy victims were always led aside and murdered in the vaults of the Tullianum.

I.—Christ was the victor, and St. Paul was led in His triumph. "Thanks be to Him who leadeth us in triumph." St. Paul had been taken captive, and he thanked God for it.

II.—St. Paul in that captivity had been enabled to crucify the old man with his affections and lusts. He had triumphed over passion and over pride and over self-will. If you are not going to allow yourself to be led in triumph

by Christ, then you will be led in triumph by Satan; if not in a service which is perfect freedom, then in a false freedom which is horrible servitude.

## THE LAMB OF GOD.

By the Rev. W. W. Peyton.

*Preached in Morningside Free Church, Edinburgh, February* 1.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." —John i. 29.

The symbols and sacraments of the ancient world, with all the want and sighing and longing they expressed, are summed up briefly in this expression, "Lamb of God." A sense of darkness and ignorance made the Greek sorrow, a sense of sin and evil the Hebrew sorrow. The Hebrew sorrow expressed itself in three ways.

I.—In a passion for forgiveness. This passion is universal to religion. There *is* forgiveness with God. In the medium of repentance we find forgiveness, and in the ancient world the blood of bulls and of goats made pictorial this forgiveness. In the new world a powerful medium is constructed, both to produce a change of mind and a vision of the unbroken relation of God to us, and this is the Divine death of Jesus.

II.—In a passion for redemption. The idea of redemption occurs a hundred and fifty times at least in Hebrew Scriptures. The idea comes from the institution of slavery. When years have stiffened us into bad habits, we are no longer masters of ourselves. We require redemption. Now, the death of Christ is a capital stored for us, on which we may draw in the sorrows of our bankruptcy.

III.—In a passion for life. Blood is the symbol of life. Forgiveness and redemption lead up to life in Christ. To be housed with Christ is to be in the society of His life. "He that drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me."

## HARMONY BETWEEN FAITH AND SPEECH.

By the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A.

*Preached in Allen Street Church, Kensington, February* 1.

"We believe, and therefore speak."—2 Cor. iv. 13.

There is here in few words the note of the true and sincere man. He says what he believes, and he believes what he says. There never was a time when the temptations to say what we do not believe were greater than they are in ours. There are temptations to insincerity in the political world and in the religious world. It is unfortunately true that there are certain things a man is expected to say. But you must not judge men by the absence or presence of phrases, but look for the vital loyalty to truth. The temptation is subtle of professing as our belief more than we have made our own. The phrases of the Apostle Paul upon the lips of boys and girls can have as a rule no possible relation to their young experience. The great English infidel, Mr. Bradlaugh, who died two days ago, was largely made what he was by an attempt to force upon him an experience that was not his own. It is this attempt to force the religious experience of the dead upon the living that is making atheists and agnostics and infidels of men against their will. What we want to-day are men whose experience is their own, who can speak in fresh, live, unconventional speech what they know of God. Such men will be full of the new life—the great sublime fact of their relationship to God. They will convince who believe what they say. Man cannot convince his fellows that there is no God, because at heart he does not believe his own gospel, though he may argue himself into it intellectually. There will be few spectacles more pathetic than the funeral of this great infidel whose life has been one hopeless assault against the

eternal rock of God's truth. A little while ago he stood before the bar of an English Parliament and got scant justice. We have repented of that wrong. He stands to-night before a higher bar, and a surer justice. Let us leave him to God.

## THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD.

By the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Manchester.

*Preached at Great St. Mary's Church, Oxford, February 8.*

"Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."—Mark xiii. 32.

I.—God became man. The incarnation of our Lord is a mystery which, like that of the creation of all things, or that of the immanency of the great Creator in His works, can never be comprehended by human thought. The will of God is a will to love, to seek and to save the lost, and for such reasons God became man.

II.—How far were the limitations of the Lord's manhood affected by its union with the Godhead? We affirm in the person of Christ two perfect natures—the human and the Divine. If we admit the true and limited humanity of our Lord, how are we to reconcile His Divine omniscience therewith? I cannot understand what transcends my finite capacity, but neither will I deny this mysterious truth. The same difficulty is presented by the uniformity of nature and the freedom of the human will. I believe that the eternal Son of God had during His human life so emptied Himself of all those Divine attributes which would have interfered with the reality of His manhood that He was really affected by human sorrow, that He really felt the seductive strain of temptation, that when He quoted passages from the Old Testament He might have no more knowledge of their age and actual authors than that which was current in His own time.

## THE MULTITUDES.

By the Rev. J. Marshall Lang, D.D.

*Preached in Barony Parish Church, Glasgow, February* 8.

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them."—Matt. ix. 36.

Consider this compassion of Jesus.

I.—It is the incident of brotherhood. Compassion comes unbidden. It cannot be manufactured by any process. The wonderfully sensitive nature of Jesus at once responds to the appeal that is presented. He discerns the burdens and the darkness of that multitude of souls, and His brotherhood feels compassion for them.

II.—It is the mainspring of action. Human action is very complex. Motives are various: of some the mainspring is self. Christ's works were all the outcome of His compassion. And because of this compassion He never pandered to the multitude He loved so well. He dealt honestly and truly with them, and at times He opposed them; and in the end there rose from these multitudes that savage cry, "Not this man, but Barabbas."

III.—This compassion is the revelation of God. He is the very brightness of the Father's glory. Every good man speaks irresistibly of God. All love in us is a reflection of a love that is greater than us. But Christ is more than a reflection: He is the exact likeness. God is infinitely compassionate—"God *so* loved the world."

## AN IDEAL LIFE.

By the Rev. C. A. Berry.

*Preached at Lancaster Road Church, London, February* 11.

"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep."—Acts xiii. 36.

This is a brief biography of David. But these words contain a philosophy as well as a biography. They present

life as a noble self-rewarding energy; death, not as an accident, or a disaster, but as an ordered dispensation.

I.—The model life as given in our text.

(1) One great characteristic of life is that it is a life of service. The teaching of Scripture is that the duty of service increases with progress in the social status. Labour is not necessarily service, and it often never reaches that dignity. Labour is often given for selfish ends and motives. Service was labour sanctified, consecrated to God.

(2) The timeliness of David's service. Men must live. in the present. There has been too much of the "cloister" idea among Christians.

(3) The loftiness of David's service. Man's service was always God's, and God's service was always man's.

II.—The conception of death as an ordered dispensation. It is like the sudden peaceful sleep of the little child who, tired with playing, falls gently and naturally into the arms of slumber.

## THE CONTRAST BETWEEN OUR LORD AND JOHN THE BAPTIST.

By the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Salisbury.

*Preached in the Chapel Royal, St. James's, February* 15.

"John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine," etc.—Luke vii. 33-5.

I.—Consider the nature and extent of the contrast. The contrast in external habits of life was a striking one. John the Baptist was from childhood a solitary, and his message was stern. Our Lord's early life looks as if intended to avoid all singularity. One of a homely circle from which there is no evidence that He separated Himself before His baptism. His message was the greatness of the love of God. Our Lord readily entered into society with no appearance of effort or condescension.

Then, the Baptist assumed nothing for himself, but pointed on to Christ. Christ assumed everything for Himself. He accepted the Baptist's homage. He claimed as His indefeasible right the position of perfect Teacher and perfect Example.

II.—The reason and meaning of the contrast. Why was our blessed Lord not more openly and rigorously ascetic? Because asceticism is not an end in itself, but only a means, varying with the conditions of society, climate and constitution. It was not put forward in our Lord's public example, lest persons, seizing on the imitable external side, might miss the greater lessons He came to teach.

## THE TRUE LENTEN SORROW.

By the Rev. Canon Body, M.A.

*Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, February* 21.

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children."—Luke xxiii. 28-9.

We find ourselves in thought on the *via dolorosa* on the morning of the first Good Friday. The procession of the Crucified is advancing toward Calvary, and He bids the daughters of Jerusalem change the nature of their weeping—weep, and weep bitterly, but offer not to Me the tears of an emotional pity. Offer to Me the tears of a spiritual grief.

I.—The life of a Christian is a life that must be one of abiding and deepening contrition. They who would follow the Lord aright must ever follow Him weeping. May we be numbered with the blessed weepers who follow the sorrowing Jesus, weeping for their sins.

II.—How does God develop within us that spiritual contrition which He seeks?

(1) He brings clearly before us the sinfulness of sin. People will acknowledge with perfect truth that wrong deed

or word or imagination; and, yet seeing they do not see the sinfulness of their sin. But gradually, or all at once, there comes across the soul a revealing light from heaven, which brings the sinner face to face with its sinfulness.

(2) He leads us to recognise the fact of responsibility for all sins committed. Jesus reminds these women that the awful crime consummated on that day is an awful sowing-time from which must issue an awful harvest. All sin once committed must at least once again be faced. So he draws from us tears of sorrow for the inevitable results of sin.

(3) He leads them to the one escape from past and present sin, and that is present repentance. Repentance is the anticipating of judgment. Face to face with my sins I stand at the bar of Christ, and the penitent's tears are wiped away by the loving ministry of Jesus, as He speaks that word of absolving grace which assures us of forgiveness and creates in the heart the hope of a glorious eternity. Let us seek this real, true, spiritual contrition. Will you give Him this Lent the offerings he craves: not the tears of pity, but the tears of contrition, tears that are the wine that maketh glad the hearts of angels and the heart of God.

## THE ULTIMATE ISSUE OF THE LAW.

By the Rev. Canon Scott-Holland, M.A.

*Preached at Great St. Mary's Church, February 22.*

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified," etc.—Rom. iii. 20, 31.

St. Paul stands at the close of the law. He is reading out to us its ultimate issues. It was a sad and barren conclusion. In the end the law had done nothing but force the knowledge of sin. It had proved itself no free brother, but a very Hagar, a mother of slaves.

I.—The righteousness which marks the man under grace contains within it the righteousness sought under the law

Goodness is still wisdom. It must have in it all the marks of intelligence such as of old the Proverbs defined. Grace works it in us through the way of penitence. There is the difference. It is the righteousness that comes of God alone through Christ. The formation of the Christian character is a lengthy and laborious task, requiring the care and discipline before God can carry out in our reluctant souls His full and perfect work.

II.—Sin is still folly: the sinner is as much as ever the great fool. That which the Jew saw we see still—the folly of the sinning fool. How pitiful the misdirection, the perversion, the waste that sin makes. To rescue the soul—that is the blessed news. The wisdom of God has drawn near to us with a far sweeter voice than ever she came nigh to the Jew of old. We can make our escape if only we will surrender ourselves to His handling who is the wisdom and the power of God.

## TEMPTERS.

By the Rev. W. M. Taylor, D.D., of New York.

"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."—Prov. i. 10.

I.—A danger implied. It is the nature of sin to be aggressive. No person was ever guilty of only one sin. His first sin might aptly have been called Gad—"A troop cometh." There was never one sinner yet who did not try to make another like himself. On earth there is a huge propaganda of evil. Hence this world is a place of danger to the young and inexperienced.

II.—A method exposed—"entice." The tempter proceeds *indirectly* and flatteringly. Among his enticements are (1) increase of knowledge, (2) pleasure, (3) love of liberty, (4) nobody will ever know.

III.—Resistance enforced—"Consent thou not." There must not be a particle of "Yes" in your "No." Say it at

the right time and in the right way. Remember these two maxims as regards our moral actions: the necessity of choice in matters of conduct; and when conscience is clear let there be no further parley.

IV.—The safeguard of holy memories—"My son." Open the book of memory at the page where a father's solicitude and a mother's love is recorded for you.

V.—This may be viewed as the utterance of God. He unfolds to us His Fatherhood in Christ, and beseeches us to resist sin.

## CONTRITION.

By the Rev. Canon Body, M.A.

*Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, February 27.*

"I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications."—Zech. xii. 10.

We are to offer to God the sacrifice of broken and contrite hearts. Where shall we gain this offering? Here, as ever, this is true: we can only give to God what God first gives to us; and the answer comes in the words of our text. In it there is given to us the revelation of the genesis of contrition. In a day of religious indifference Zechariah is privileged to look upon a vision that kindles hope. He sees the people turning from their sins to God with deep contrition.

I.—Contrition must be learned at the foot of the Cross.

Contrition is the breaking of the sinner's heart in union with the broken heart of Jesus. All contrition flows from the vision of the Crucified. Our Lord's death upon the cross was the expression of a perfect contrition. He sorrowed with a perfect sorrow for the sins of men. He condemned those sins with a perfect condemnation. He bowed Himself down under the Father's hand, and bore the penance of those sins with a perfect conformity of will. His is a meritorious contrition.

II.—Whence is it that there is this power in the vision of the Crucified to awaken and develop contrition in the penitent's heart?

(1) There is an assimilating power in the vision of Jesus in his Passion.

(2) There is an illuminating power. We see our sin, and we see the love of God, and we see the path of duty.

(3) There is an attractive power. Sin loses its attractions.

## THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD.

By the Rev. Principal Simon, D.D.

*Preached at Newport Congregational Church.*

"The beauty of the Lord."—Psalm xxvii. 4, xc. 17.

We do not often think of God as beautiful. We dwell on His power, wisdom, justice, majesty and goodness, but not so often on His Divine beauty. No theologian has ever given beauty a place in his list of the Divine attributes. Yet the writers of the Psalms evidently believed that God was beautiful; they had seen the beauty of God, and the sight had enkindled their ardent desire. By the Greeks the Divine was always represented as beautiful: even the might and majesty of Zeus were cast in the mould of beauty. Even in our hymns it was only of late that the beauty of God and of the earth has been recognised. Perhaps the reason of this is the prominence given to the dark fact of sin and its consequences. Sin destroys beauty, and it takes away the capability of discerning beauty.

I.—Everywhere in the physical world the Divine activity speaks of the beauty of God. God's works are all done with infinite grace and ease. The passage of a train across the Tay Bridge makes more noise than all the planets put together. See how the finger of time changes ugliness into beauty.

II.—Beauty of disposition. A beautiful face with an

ugly soul behind it is an awful combination. But our ideals are always beautiful, and glimpses of the ideal are in reality glimpses of God's ineffable beauty. Each Christian must realise the beauty of the Divine Master, and thus attract the world to Him.

## PURIFICATION.

By the Rev. Canon Body, M.A.

*Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, March* 13.

"I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined," etc.—Zech. xiii. 9.

Consider the purpose of God in asking His children to live with Him the life of contrition. God is seeking our personal purification. The great work God is doing within us is the separating of the pure from the impure.

I.—Life is a purgatory, and is intended to be purgatorial. God's penances here are not punitive, but remedial. Our sorrows form the mystic fire in which God wills to separate between us and our sin. Why does character sometimes determinate under God's discipline of life? Because the suffering is not looked upon in its true light nor submitted to in a true spirit.

II.—If there had been no sin, there would have been no intermediate state, and hence it follows that it is a penitential discipline, for the purifying of the spirit. The vision of Jesus seen by us coming out of the sinful past, and carrying into His presence a marred nature, how can that vision be anything but one that develops contrition even to the limit of perfection?

The intermediate state is a state of joy, because it is a state of purgation.

III.—Sweet communion. You could not bear the purification but for this—"They shall call upon Me, and I will answer."

## PASSING OVER JORDAN.

By the Rev. John McNeill.

*Preached at Regent Square Presbyterian Church.*

"Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host," etc.—Josh. i. 10, 11.

Think of the other side by the help of this story.

I.—Preparation. "Prepare for victuals." If literally in these days we were to pass over Jordan how some of us would change, how some of us would confess sin, how we would begin to drink of the cup of forgiveness, how we should read God's word! Get ready for the change.

II.—Passing over. See how bravely, how definitely this crossing the water of death is put: "Ye shall pass over." You shall not go under, but through, and out at the far side. A great many of us have a bad habit that, before the actual call to pass over the chilly waters of Jordan, we go and sit on the bank and dabble our feet in the water. So God's people oftentimes cause themselves chills and shivers.

III.—Possession. In this life there is no real possession. Yonder is possession, absolute and everlasting. When we get across Jordan there is no more fighting, no more Hittites, or any of the other ites—and we are all of one blood, the blood-bought, blood-redeemed.

## THE PASSION.

By the Rev. Canon W. J. Knox-Little, M.A.

*Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, March 16.*

"I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do."—John xvii. 4.

That was the solemn, majestic, unflinching cry of the representative Man, when, passing the Kedron on the night of His sufferings, He began the great oblation by which we

are saved. In our meditations on the Passion three truths must govern our hearts.

I.—God is brought within arm-sweep, within absolute touch, in Jesus Christ. The human heart strains with great fatigue towards the Eternal, and it flags in its flight, and it is very much tempted, amid the common things of time, to give the thing up in despair. To be near God in fact and to be near God in thought are different things.

II.—God is not only brought near us, but He is brought near under a tremendous conflict between the two most powerful forces—love and death. And the Christian Church asserts that in the Passion of our most dear Master the cry of the mystic prophet is true—Love is as strong as death. Love and death meet in their highest conflict, and in their final and splendid expression on the Cross.

III.—In the last great sermon on the Cross (given to us to instruct and to sanctify and to redeem) will be found all the magnificence of God's Eternal Being, and all the sweetness of Christ's human nature, all the final expressions of what man yearns for.

Let us apply these great truths. Take an important district of your life-work, and put it under the shadow of the Passion.

(1) The first message He left behind to the working creature is *diligence*.

(2) The next message that He left was *honesty*. He might have evaded the great trial and the contumely and scorn of the night of His sorrow, if He had made a manœuvre or played a part. Commercial life in England is undermined by dishonesty. Look up at that life, so determinedly honest.

III.—The work of the Passion was marked by its *hidden reality*. The temptation of the moment is to make an outward show, to be heard of in the newspapers. Remem

ber the hidden reality of things. Do not despise your common duty, but under the shadow of the Passion of your Master remember its dignity. God gave it you to do.

Never in the history of humanity did any man dare to say, "I have finished the work that Thou gavest me to do." There is nothing sadder than unfinished labour. But in the last resort, when you and I have failed, there is One that has done a finished work. And if we have not been diligent, if we have not been honest, and if we have been unreal, at least we can creep to the feet of the great Worker who died for all.

## SOCIETY IN THE LIGHT OF THE CROSS.

By the Rev. Canon W. J. Knox-Little, M.A.

*Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, March 17.*

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."—John xii. 24.

In these words Jesus revealed to the Greek proselytes the lasting power of His Passion. Face to face with that tremendous event, we feel like those who heard Him; first, that we are out on an illimitable sea. But we feel that we are bringing life under a great light—the beacon-light of the Passion of our Lord. Place a district of human life—society—under this light of the Passion, and we may learn a lesson. Apart from work, we must live in a vast community, we are members of society. Jesus when He came to the earth found a society.

I.—What did He do first of all? He broke it in pieces, and He left the fragments scattered around His bleeding feet. The great system of Roman civilisation and the greater system of Greek philosophy went into nothingness under that strange solvent of the Cross.

II.—He re-made society. If you want to read details of

the work of the Crucified in re-making society, I commend you to read the ninth chapter of Gibbon's history. Jesus brought before men one great and energetic power, that the greatest of all things is not self-assertion, but self-forgetfulness and humility. He brought before men the magnificent force of real and lasting patience. Jesus brought before men the fact that the Cross, the dying of God for the sake of goodness, was the widening of the human horizon, and that henceforth society must not forget it.

III.—He gripped the society that He re-made. In spite of all the corruptions and all the sorrows, He grips it until that day when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of God and His Christ.

## THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY OF OUR LORD.

By the Rev. Canon Body, M.A.

*Preached at All Saints', Margaret Street, March* 20.

"Christ being come an high priest of good things to come," etc. — Heb. ix. 11, 12.

It is an essential condition of our growth into conformity with the Divine character that we should be living in the peace of God. Peace is no mere luxury. Peace reacts on our inner character, and is the secret of continuance in the Divine union. In the words of the text we are bidden to gaze on the Incarnate coming into the ranks of men, and fulfilling there His ministry as a God-sent Priest, to whom God has given His covenant of peace.

Peace is inner repose of being as we rest in the sunshine of God's love. God is the creature's peace, and it is only upon His heart that we can know peace. The angels dwell in peace, but they are sinless. Sinlessness is not within our grasp here; therefore our peace can only be made on the basis of reconciliation. This joy of reconcilia-

tion is given to us through the priestly ministries of Jesus. Because He is pleading His Passion and claiming for us Divine forgiveness, the past is blotted out; because He pleads and claims for us the gift of perseverance, we are held in security in the present; because He pleads, we are kept free from dread of the future.

Jesus pleads before the Father His obedience unto death, and claims that gift of peace for penitents which by His death He merited.

Jesus gives this peace because He is the ministering priest in the Divine Tabernacle. The Tabernacle through which He ministers is His own human nature. He ministers also through the mystical body of His Church—by baptism, absolution and the Eucharist.

Living in the abiding Lent of a penitent's life, you shall learn increasingly to blend your Lenten Misereres with Easter songs of joy, until at length you reach that land which is eternally one glorious Easter—the life of a risen people living with their risen Lord.

## THE CENSUS AND ITS RELIGIOUS ASPECT.

By the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, London, April 5.*

"When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel."—Exod. xxx. 12.

This first census of which we have any recorded history took place more than three thousand years ago. It was taken in the wilderness, and in a very different way from that in which our census is taken.

From the grouped tribes every man of twenty years of age and upwards was called out, and afterwards passed over to the crowd of the "numbered." No women or children were numbered. Women and children owe even more than men to the influence of Jesus Christ. Then each man

had to pay a half-shekel, about thirteenpence halfpenny, at the express command of God, to be devoted to religious purposes. The census was the solemn recognition of the separate individuality, the responsible manhood of every full-grown Israelite.

The payment of the half-shekel was an acknowledgment of his obligation to sue for the mercy of Heaven and to do the will of God. When you fill up your census-paper remember that you are a sinful being before you are anything else. Do you not realise the necessity of paying the half-shekel, of ransoming your soul? The census expresses the solidarity of our interests. All humanity is one great organism, one colossal man, as Pascal says, of whom Christ is the Head. No one can say that he is so insignificant that it does not matter whether he goes to the devil or not. Nobody will be left out because of his poverty or crime.

## FAITH'S ACCESS.

By the Rev. A. Maclaren, D.D.

*Preached at Union Chapel, Manchester, April 19.*

"Ye are come to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."—Heb. xii. 23.

Here we pass within the palace gates, and the writer tells us what we find there. Our God dwells in the midst of a blessed society; and the solitary souls that find their way into His presence have a welcome, not only from Him, but from all their brethren of His great family.

I.—Faith plants us at the very bar of God—"Ye are come to the God of all as Judge." The judicial aspect of the Divine presence is insisted on here.

(1) Here is a truth which it is the office of faith to realise continually in our daily lives. If we could rend the veil as death will rend it and see the things which are

as faith helps us to see them—for faith *thins* the envious curtain between—should our lives be as they are?

(2) This fragment of God is one to be joyfully accepted by the Christian.

II.—Faith carries us while living to the society of the living dead.

They dwell freed from the incubus and limitations of a bodily organisation. They are perfected. They have reached their goal in Christ. Their spirits would not have been perfected there unless they had been made just here.

## FEEDING THE FLOCK.

By the Rev. H. Montagu Butler, D.D.

*Preached in Westminster Abbey, April 26, on the occasion of the Consecration of the Bishops of Rochester and Peterborough.*

"Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" etc.—John xxi. 15.

This passage is almost unequalled for tenderness and power. We see Christ forgiving, encouraging, pleading for His own, and handing them over as a sacred trust—"Feed My sheep."

I.—We must see mankind as Christ sees it, as His flock.

II.—We must understand what it is to feed this flock. Premising this food must be spiritual food—the body and blood of Christ. Then the shepherd must understand his flock, to sympathise with all. Nor must the bishop of souls forget "other sheep which are not of this fold." The true bishop will long to have a heart not less large than his Master's. "Them also I must bring": that is the Divine necessity which presses on the heart of the good Shepherd. To feel this burden, to believe in the sure word of His own prophecy "They shall hear My voice," to keep ever before the eye the crowning vision of the one flock and the one Shepherd, is a part of every true and great episcopacy.

## THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

By the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Peterborough.

*Preached at Great St. Mary's Church, Oxford, April 26.*

"The excellency of the knowledge Christ Jesus my Lord."—Phil. iii. 8.

I.—"The knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" is the element which gives force to the Christian character. It gives a power beyond the attainment of the highest culture, the noblest development of the natural man. It opens out infinite possibilities because it delivers from those limitations which gather round the soul and impede its progress. It is in the choice—the creation—of its world that the soul's success or failure is made manifest.

II.—This knowledge is progressive. The world's gross lamps cannot rival heaven's white light. Great is the dignity of man, but greater the dignity of the Christian who bears the marks and tokens of the Spirit's power. This knowledge should be set forth in our lives as powerful to mould character, as mighty in operation, as a mainspring of beneficent energy, as a preservative against narrowness and imperfect sympathy. To be the "salt of the earth" is a vast responsibility; but it is also an eternal truth.

## PRAYER.

By the Rev. Canon Scott-Holland, M.A.

*Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, May 3.*

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you."—John xvi. 23, 24.

Human life is the expression of a want: its inner movement is desire for something unattained. This is one deep

reason why prayer belongs to the very staff of human life. Man's untiring demands must look ever upwards to the Father's face.

I.—Human life is a life of asking, a life of prayer. Sin has disturbed the even flow of men's desires, and men's demands are the issue of a distracted will.

II.—The name of Jesus is to put all man's askings to the proper proof—"In My name." Under that name alone can a petition be sanctioned. Feeble and stammering though our lips be, it is in the name of Jesus that we pray—inside His name, not outside in the cold.

(1) That name is redemptive in winning for us a favourable hearing.

(2) It is regulative also in fashioning our prayers. Are our prayers conformed to the mind of Jesus Christ? So alone do we pray *in His name.*

## THE BLESSED OF THE LORD.

By the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

*Preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, May 3.*

"Thou art now the blessed of the Lord."—Gen. xxxvi. 29.

That was the testimony of the enemies of Isaac. There are Christian people who are so eminently favoured of Heaven, that even those who despise and oppose them cannot help saying of them that they are the blessed of the Lord.

What made this to be said of Isaac?

I.—Perhaps it was because of his wonderful prosperity. I have heard say that prosperity was the blessing of the old covenant and adversity the blessing of the new. It is true that worldly prosperity may be sent as a token of Divine favour.

II.—These Philistines must have been impressed by his gentleness. Nothing has such a power over ungodly men as meekness of spirit.

III.—That was also the testimony of the Lord to Isaac. He said, "I will be with thee, and bless thee." It was a promise founded on covenant.

IV.—Isaac had a very singular proof that he was blessed of God, for he told a lie about Rebecca and he was found out, and got ashamed of it. Whenever your sins make you miserable thank God, for it is better to smart than to sin. If a Christian sins he will certainly be found out, and it is a mark of God's blessing that it is so.

V.—Ask to be the blessed of the Lord now. Why not have two heavens, a heaven here and a heaven there? To-day is an anniversary of deep interest to me. Forty-one years ago I went down into the river and was baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. On this 3rd of May may there be bursting of buds and opening of flowers, and hearts rejoicing in the Lord Jesus, since "they are now the blessed of the Lord."

## A PLEA FOR THE CHILDREN.

By the Ven. F. W. Farrar, D.D.

*Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, on Sunday-School Festival, May* 11.

"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Eph. vi. 4.

I.—The work of the Sunday-school teacher is performed in direct obedience to the command of Christ. It was He who first consecrated human infancy.

II.—You are labouring not for earth, but for heaven.

III.—You are dealing with children during the most plastic time of life. President Garfield used to say there was a certain court-house in his native town of which the roof

was a natural watershed, so that a breath of air or flutter of a bird's wing decided whether a water-drop should find its way to the torrid gulf of Mexico or the frozen gulf of St. Lawrence.

IV.—Though results are unknown, your lightest acts may be seeds for fruit in heaven.

V.—The very origin of Sunday-school teaching should be an encouragement. Think of the two men, Robert Raikes and John Pounds.

There are three elements in the certain future of England which make religious education supremely necessary.

(1) The growth of great cities.

(2) The vast increase of general population.

(3) The unbridled growth of a reckless communism.

## THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

By the Ven. Archdeacon Norris, D.D.

*Preached at Great St. Mary's Church, Oxford, May* 10.

"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come," etc.—Acts i. 10, 11.

In the wistful upward gaze of the disciples the angels seem to have discerned the tinge of sadness, as though His parting benediction had been a leave-taking. So far from that, this ascension should be to them an earnest and a pledge of the promised return. Christ's ascension is also to us a guarantee of His return. In this age Christ's return has not the same vivid interest that it had to those first disciples. The thought of our going to Christ has replaced the thought of His return to us. But the same lapse of time which has pushed the Second Advent into the distance has also rendered the divers senses in which Christ spoke of His return more intelligible to us. In a race it is

difficult at first to distinguish the runners; but after a while it is clearly seen that one is reaching the goal, another is in middle course. What are the lessons of the ascension?

(1) It taught the apostles that Christ's work on earth was completed.

(2) It taught the royalty and sovereignty of Christ.

(3) It taught the power of Christ's intercession at God's right hand.

## THE AARONIC BLESSING.

By the Rev. Canon Mason, D.D.

*Preached at Great St. Mary's Church, May 24.*

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee."—Num. vi. 22-7.

I.—"The Lord bless thee and keep thee." This is pre-eminently the blessing of the Father. The language sets forth the positive and negative side of God's ever-watchful beneficence. It involves all good gifts and deprecates all the opposite evils.

II.—The second part of the benediction is especially the blessing of the Father through the Son. The words suggest the thought of *favour* and of *revelation.* The Aaronic blessing is a prophecy of the Incarnation, for we cannot help thinking of St. Paul's words, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus." The true characteristic of the revelation given by Christ was *graciousness.*

III.—The blessing of the Holy Ghost is seen in the third movement of this benediction. The Holy Spirit lights up that glorious and gracious face of Christ before our eyes, and gives us peace thereby.

## GOD'S INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS.

By the Rev. Maclaren, D.D.

*Preached in Union Chapel, Manchester, June 4.*

"That ye may know . . . what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."—Eph. i. 18.

I.—The inheritance. The idea here is simply that of possession—none of succession. What is the portion of the soul? God. And how do men possess God? Obedience, contemplation, transformation, these are the hands by which we here lay hold on God.

II.—The heirs. Saints are people separated and set apart for God as His property. There are three steps: you cannot have heaven unless you have God; you cannot have God unless you have holiness; you cannot have holiness without faith.

III.—The heirs' present knowledge of their future blessedness. If we want to know as much as may be known of the blessedness of heaven, let us possess much of the knowledge and love of God on earth. Hope does not need information half as much as it needs assurance. Like some flower in the cranny of the rock, it can spread a broad bright blossom on little soil, if only it be firmly rooted.

## A LIST OF VIRTUES.

By the Rev. Principal A. M. Fairbairn, D.D.

*Preached on the occasion of the prize-giving at Leys School, Cambridge, June 5.*

"Add to your aith virtue."—2 Peter i. 5-7.

The Apostle urges us to give all diligence to add to our virtues.

I.—The first indispensable thing is faith. Faith is at once an act of mind and a quality of character.

II.—Next comes virtue—or manliness, as the term means. Manliness is the exact outward expression of faithfulness.

III.—Another quality is needed—knowledge. Faith must always be qualified by knowledge. All knowledge comes from God and leads to Him.

IV.—Temperance. The Greek would have said that a man could be tipsy on pride, intoxicated with passion, drunk with vanity, intemperate in speech. Wherever intemperance existed it is bad.

V.—Patience. Not the virtue of Job, but staying-power, holding right on. This virtue is intimately related to temperance: a temperate man could work long without being weary.

VI.—Godlikeness. If a man were godlike, that fact would be expressed in kindness. Kindness meant being of kin. Brotherly kindness is first the kinship of brothers. It makes us feel "This man so much outcast is still my brother."

VII.—Charity or love. If this is added to the list of virtues, so an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## BETHESDA.

By the Rev. A. Mackennal, D.D.

*Preached at the Dedication of Emmanuel Congregational Church, East Dulwich, June* 10.

"In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water."—John v. 3.

Any one who has visited the baths of England, France or Germany, will have no difficulty in imagining this pathetic

picture. "Waiting for the moving of the water": this is exactly what the world is for ever doing. Every age has its panacea for the woes of humanity; but still we wait the vivifying touch, and often wait in vain.

I.—Christ's first endeavour is to reawaken our hope and purpose—"Wilt thou be made whole?" He would quicken the hope of recovery.

II.—Christ calls for a definite act of faith—"Rise." He always demands action, not simply as a test of reality in believing, but as a condition of His aid.

III.—Christ calls for faith in Himself. The man hints to Jesus the request to help him into the pool at the right moment. The living Christ is the source of the world's healing.

## "WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION."

By the Rev. T. Vincent Tymms.

*Preached in Downs Chapel, Clapton, June 14.*

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."—Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Paul has been musing upon the last words of Moses, and this passage is a corollary to that sad address. But Paul is able to reverse every line of Moses' melancholy dirge. What the law of Moses could not do, that the law of spiritual life in Christ had done and might be expected to do still.

I.—Religion is a personal and inward thing. Personal responsibility to God for the soul's health and salvation: this is Paul's doctrine.

II.—The great worker of salvation is God. The living Saviour saves.

III.—The fact that God is working in us is given as a reason why we should work for ourselves. That which

God prompts—to pray, to put down evil passions, to do good—God will succour and sustain. Because God works, work thou.

IV.—A lesser motive which the Apostle uses is to do this great thing for his sake, that his work may not be found a failure. Men talk glibly of ministerial failure and success, and judge of these things by very false standards. Better a church of twenty persons who resemble Christ in life and work, than a great multitude without His Spirit.

## SHOWERS OF BLESSING.

By the Rev. James Stalker, D.D.

*Preached in Free St. Matthew's, Glasgow, June 21.*

"There shall be showers of blessing."—Ezek. xxxiv. 26.

This word "blessing" is one which belongs strictly to the vocabulary of religion. Irreligious people do not speak about blessing.

I.—The copiousness of the blessing. If the will and love of God could have free course, there would be showers of blessing. The obstacle which hinders is in ourselves. Have you never, when enjoying any of the simple pleasures of nature, reflected with surprise on how little they are taken advantage of? It is so with the blessing of God, so near and yet so far on account of our negligence. How few cultivate source of blessings—prayer, study of Bible, a whiter holiness, more spiritual power.

II.—Its timeliness—"to come down in its season." This refers to the temporal blessing of the early and the latter rain, but it has a wider scope. Blessing of every kind comes in its season—in the time of need when the hearts of men are sighing for it. This is God's season for which He waits. In ordinary life it is the little extra which makes all the

difference between the weak and the strong man—health, capital, art. May Christians heed this little more. It is near at hand; one act of surrender and it is yours.

III.—The diffusiveness of God's blessing—"the places round about." To be a Christian is to be so filled with the life of God that the vessel runs over, and all round about get the benefit. This is a severe test. Can you stand it?

## SELF-RELIANCE.

By the Right Rev. W. Boyd Carpenter, D.D., Lord Bishop of Ripon.

*Preached in St. Andrew's Church, Stoke Newington, June 28.*

"If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go."—Judges iv. 8.

Such expressions are good or bad according to the motive which dictated them. At first sight Barak's prayer seems a natural one, and even a pious one. Did he not regard Deborah as the Divine representative?

I.—A prayer which betrays weakness of character and weakness of faith. He had an express message to act on, and he should not wait to make conditions. It is the realisation of the Divine presence alone which makes the higher range of faith. In Barak's testing hour he betrayed weakness, and the laurels of that victory did not fall to him.

II.—Learn the measureless importance of self-reliance in every affair of life. Life is a constant movement from companionship into isolation. The final decisions of life rest with ourselves. Cultivate the habit of self-reliance. These words "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world," are calculated to give new force to faith and new power to self-reliance.

## IF ANY MAN THIRST.

By the Rev. John McNeill.

*Preached at Presbyterian Church, Regent Square.*

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."—John vii. 37.

I.—Jesus, as a preacher, had a splendid eye for an opportunity. He saw an occasion. He could make occasions too, as we cannot. He Himself was His mission. Not only the Messenger, but the Message; and here to His hand was a great opportunity to push His mission. People from all parts had gathered to this most popular Feast of Tabernacles. A word spoken now will go from Dan to Beersheba and beyond.

II.—Notice how apposite is the message. The Son of God stood right in the heart of Jewish ritual at its best, and said, "It means Me." Come unto Me and drink, if after a week of ritual your heart is not fed or filled.

III.—There is a condition. Do you thirst? Jesus saw thirst in their very eyes—yearning, dissatisfaction. All thirst wants Jesus. Don't go to the wrong fountain.

IV.—Jesus Christ fits us. Christ is like cold water to a thirsty soul. Did Christ ever become to you what a drink of cool water is to the tired thirsty man? Believing is drinking.

## THE HOMELINESS OF JESUS.

By the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse.

*Preached in Durham Street Church, Christchurch, New Zealand, July* 5.

"The Son of man came eating and drinking."—Matt. ix. 19.

This was a strange thing for the Lord to say of Himself. His enemies found in these words an opportunity of vile abuse—"a man gluttonous," "a friend of publicans and

sinners." For good or harm, few things are more powerful than a name: a good epithet has determined the fate of many a great effort.

This was how He came, "eating and drinking,"—the homely, brotherly Jesus interested in the common business of our life. This homeliness meets us everywhere.

I.—See this purpose in the circumstances of His birth. Here in the manger was the Brother of the poorest, the gift of God's love to the whole world, to Whom whosoever will may come—no door to keep back, no attendant to whisper a forbidding word.

II.—In His coming as a public teacher. Wherever Jesus went the people felt the welcome of that great brotherliness. Little children, sinful women, trembling lepers were at home with Jesus.

III.—In the choice of His disciples. Men with broad Galilean brogue and simple ways and peasant's dress.

IV.—In the teachings of the Lord. He told simple exquisite stories which children and the poorest understood.

V.—In His miracles. Power would only amaze men: He sought to *win* them. This real Saviour understands us, is at home with us, knowing all the worst, and yet loving, and willing to help.

## CONSECRATED AND TRANSFORMED.

By the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse.

*Preached in Durham Street Church, Christchurch, July* 5.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," etc.—Rom. xii. 1, 2.

This is the entreaty of a man who was living this life of blessedness. It is the entreaty of a man who had lingered at the Cross until its great love possessed him.

I.—Look at the consecration to which we are urged. There are two leading ideas.

(1) Sacrifice—nothing in God's world is any good until it is given up to that which is above it.

(2) Transformation—everything by sacrifice not lost, but turned into higher life.

II.—The result of this consecration.

(1) "Be not conformed to this world." This is the only way upward—first right with God, and then right with all things: the world is put in its right place.

(2) The renewed mind has new faculties of discernment. "That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." We cannot know God's will until we are given up to it. Your part is the surrender of yourself to God: if you do your part, be quite sure that He will do His. The transformation begun will go on until we be made in all things like unto our blessed Lord.

## MAN'S SHARE IN GOD'S REST.

By the Rev. A. Maclaren, D.D.

*Preached in Union Chapel, Manchester, August 2.*

"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."—Heb. iv. 11.

I.—The rest of God. This means the repose of satisfaction in an accomplished ideal. The rest of God is another form of unceasing activity. In a modified form this repose of God may be possessed even by the imperfect workers here upon earth.

II.—The barriers against and the conditions of entrance into that rest. The writer states two things as barriers—unbelief and its consequence and manifestation, as well

as root disobedience. The condition of entrance is faith. Repose ensues from faith, and unrest dogs unbelief.

III.—The discipline to secure the entrance. The word "labour" carries with it the two ideas of earnestness and of diligence. We must cultivate our faith—by contemplating the great object which kindles it, by resolving that we will exercise it; by averting our eyes from distracting competitors for our attention. Obedience, too, must be cultivated by contemplating the great motive—"Ye are not your own." If thus we do, we shall enjoy a foretaste of the Sabbath-keeping of the heavens, and be wrapped in the stillness of the rest of God.

## CO-OPERATING WITH GOD.

By the Rev. F. B. Meyer.

*Preached at Northfield Convention, July* 1891.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."—Phil. ii. 12, 13.

God has two workshops—nature and the human heart. In each He is a very present worker. In nature God never works alone. Every ear of corn that rustles in the summer breeze is the result of man co-operating with God. In all Christian work and endeavour God calls us to be His fellow-workers. In a man's salvation it is true that God and man co-operate. Salvation is conjugated in three tenses—past, present and future. "According to His mercy He saved us." That is a thing done and finished once for all. Between these comes the present tense of salvation, which means deliverance from the power of sin. It is in this tense that man's co-operation with God comes in. Take heart. God is working in you and for your emancipation. True religion is when man's will says yes

to God's will, and God always gives the power to do when He gives the will. God works very quietly in nature. Yet in quiet summer days the corn is getting golden, and the fruit is ripening, and you could not miss one of those times when God seemed to have gone to sleep. Often in life it seems as if nothing were stirring inside, but the character is ripening: God is working; let Him work.

## ACCORDING TO ABILITY.

By the Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D.

*Preached in City Temple.*

"And he shall offer such as he can get."—Lev. xiv. 30.

He shall "offer": that is the law. But he shall offer only "such as he can get": that is the mercy. Everywhere in the Holy Book we find judgment and mercy, law and love.

I.—The variety of offering on the Christian altar. Here is a great offering of gold. Here an offering of work—an offering of music of home-service. The history of the home-church never can be put into words. It is the quarry out of which all other churches are built. Here is a great offering of love. Love has no hours.

II.—The tenderness of law. We need not ask if this Book is inspired—it stoops so loyally to our need that it cannot be plebeian in its build. There is a sense in which we can all do more. It is true in so far as it proceeds out of the deeper doctrine that we can all be more. When some men die what vacancies they create! Obscure love is winning for itself in heaven immortal fame, but we know it not. We shall never have any revival of hand-action that is worth anything until we have a revival of heart-life, heart-love, heart-faith.

## TRIFT AND BROTHERHOOD.

By the Archbishop of Canterbury.

*Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, August 2nd, to the Delegates of the High Court of the Ancient Order of Foresters.*

"The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting."—Prov. xii. 27.

"He that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."—Hag. i. 6.

You recognise how the old story of Jacob and Esau might have supplied the groundwork of King Solomon's proverb. The athletic brother was after all the slothful when the pinch came. Esau must gratify himself at once without caring what it costs.

The other words are spoken by Haggai, and he accounts for the wretchedness of his people in a moment when they ought to have been at the height of happiness. They were putting their wages into a bag with holes. Is there not another application of these words? Is it only in times of distress that earnings are put into bags with holes? The spendthrift does this, and the miser does it as surely, for no creature is the better of the hoardings. The two giant evils against which king and prophet protested you abjure—waste and covetousness. The two principles which king and prophet taught are your principles—thrift and brotherliness. When we truly love men as men, then we shall not be far from the love of God. In the Eastern poem the sage who feared that his heart was not capable of loving God, but who could honestly say "Write me as one who loves his fellow-men," was taken by the hand of the angel and bidden to enter the presence of his God.

## *INFIRMITIES.*

By the Rev. Harry Jones, M.A.

*Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, August 23.*

"The Spirit helpeth our infirmities."—Rom. viii. 26.

Our paternity is omnipotent, and we have power to rule the world and the flesh if we will. Our infirmities are manifold, but that over which the control of the Spirit is most needed is called by St. Paul "the flesh." There is nothing about which men are more concerned than bodily health. An enormous gathering has been summoned to London this month for the advancement of hygienic discovery. Its one ultimate aim is the improvement of human health.

I.—The Divine concern for mortal wants. Christians call to mind that Old Testament laws have much to say about the laws of health. The New Testament teaches another estimate of bodily conditions. At the root of all we find that mysterious sentence "The Word was made flesh." Christ announced as the test of Divine acceptance the clothing of the naked, and the first commission of His disciples included healing. The teaching of the Epistles is to control animal appetite. The body is held in high honour as the "temple of the Holy Ghost."

II.—The flesh must be put under the Spirit's control. The realisation of Divine power is the best basis of any attempt to better human health. Christ the Healer looked up to heaven and sighed when He had a defective sufferer brought before Him.

## THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS.

By the Rev. R. F. Horton, M.A.

*Preached at Lyndhurst Road Congregational Church, August 23.*

"Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."—John xv. 14.

Few men, even few Christians, take these words of Jesus seriously. We do not claim this heavenly friendship within our reach.

I.—This is not a figurative expression at all. It implies not less, but more, than we understand as comprehended in an earthly friendship. There is the difference of the transcendent glory of the Friend. How much of our joy depends on the society of friends! The society of Jesus is offered to us as a constant source of joy. This Friend is the great practical "Friend in need."

II.—Some may think that the words do not apply to them. These words were addressed to His disciples,—men who had obeyed His call and followed Him. Whoever does what He commands is His disciple and His friend. What are His commandments. (1) That we should believe in the goodness and love of Jesus Christ. (2) That we should trust Him and bring to Him the burden of our conscious sin and weakness. (3) That we should carry out this faith in our daily lives. By habitually abiding in Him we shall be the daily recipients of His Divine strength.

III.—Some may say that modesty forbids them to claim this high friendship of Jesus. Is it not rather the height of pride and self-conscious audacity to refuse it?

There is the friendship of Jesus. There is the friendship of the world. Which will you choose?

# SERMON TEXTS OF THE YEAR.

REV. HENRY ALLON, D.D.

**Prophetical Succession (the late Drs. Hannay and Dexter).**—"Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" Zech. i. 5. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Nov. 26th, 1890.)

MOST REV. EDWARD W. BENSON, D.D., *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

**Thrift and Brotherhood.**—"The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting." Prov. xii. 27. "He that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." Hag. i. 6. (*Christian World Pulpit*, August 12th; *Family Churchman*, August 7th.)

REV. DR. A. K. H. BOYD.

**The Ministry.**—"This ministry." 2 Cor. iv. 1. (*Life and Work*, June.)

REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, LL.D.

**The Wealth and Power of Man.**—(*Christian World Pulpit*, Jan. 14th.)

REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D.D.

**The Book of Life.**—"The book of life." Rev. iii. 5. (*Christian World Pulpit*, July 8th.)

REV. PROF. A. B. BRUCE, D.D.

**Christ's Message to the Multitude.**—"And He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying." Matt. v. 2. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Nov. 26th, 1890.)

RIGHT REV. W. BOYD CARPENTER, D.D., *Bishop of Ripon.*

**The Benediction of Responsibility.**—"Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." Psalm xlv. 16. (*Family Churchman*, Oct. 17th, 1890.)

REV. THOMAS CHAMPNESS.

**Joshua one of God's Grand Old Men.**—"And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth," etc. Josh. xxiii. 14. (*Methodist Times*, Sept. 4th, 1890.)

REV. JOHN CLIFFORD, M.A., D.D.

**Canon Liddon: Preacher and Apologist.**—"And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks." Acts xviii. 4, 5. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Sept. 17th, 1890.)

**The Message of 1890 to Young Men.**—(*Christian World Pulpit*, Jan. 14th.)

**Charles Bradlaugh: a Typical Sceptic of our Age.**—(*Christian World Pulpit*, Feb. 11th.)

**John Wesley.**—"Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Acts iii. 25. (*Christian World Pulpit*, March 11th.)

**The Best Defence of the Bible.**—"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. iii. 12-15. (*Christian World Pulpit*, May 13th.)

REV. R. W. DALE, D.D., LL.D.

**The Ministry Required by the Age.**—(*British Weekly*, Nov. 6th and 13th, 1890.)

**The Incarnation.**—"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John i. 18. (*British Weekly*, Jan. 1st.)

**The Kingship of Jesus.**—"Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again into the mountain Himself alone." John vi. 15. (*Christian World Pulpit*, April 29th.)

**The Divine Life in Man.**—(*The Independent*, July 17th.)

REV. PROF. A. B. DAVIDSON, D.D.

**The Rich Young Ruler.**—"Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Mark x. 17-21. (*Christian World Pulpit*, June 17th.)

REV. W. J. DAWSON.

**Symbolism.**—"And he called it Nehushtan." 2 Kings xviii. 4. (*Scottish Pulpit*, Sept. 17th, 1890.)

REV. PROF. MARCUS DODS, D.D.

**Self in the Way.**—"And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Matt. xix. 16. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Sept. 2nd, 1890.)

**The Union Jack.**—An address to the Boys Brigade. (*British Weekly*, April 16th.)

REV. PRINCIPAL T. C. EDWARDS, D.D.

**Christ the Author of Salvation.**—"And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Heb. v. 9. (*British Weekly*, Feb. 26th.)

REV. PRINCIPAL A. M. FAIRBAIRN, D.D.

**Elect of God (the late Dr. Hannay).**—"The faith of God's elect." Titus i. 1. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Nov. 19th, 1890.)

**Jew, Greek and Christian.**—"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block." 1 Cor. i. 22-4. (*Christian World Pulpit*, June 17th.)

VEN. ARCHDEACON FARRAR, D.D.

**The Bread of Life.**—"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone." Matt. iv. 4. (*Family Churchman*, Oct. 10th, 1890.)

**Seedtime and Harvest.**—"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and day and night, shall not cease." Gen. viii. 22. (*Family Churchman*, Oct. 16th, 1890.)

**The Spirit of the Prophet.**—"Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them." Num. xi. 29. (*Family Churchman*, Oct. 31st, 1890.)

**Social Amelioration and General Booth.**—"Which now of these three . . . proved himself a neighbour to

him that fell among the thieves?" Luke x. 36, 37. (*Family Churchman*, Nov. 14th, 1890; *Christian World Pulpit*, Nov. 12th, 1890.)

**The Work of the Individual.**—"Then I said, Here am I: send me." Isa. vi. 8. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Nov. 19th, 1890.)

**The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Force.**—"For the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Matt. xi. 12. (*Family Churchman*, Dec. 5th, 1890; *Christian World Pulpit*, Dec. 3rd, 1890.)

**A Saviour.**—"A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." Luke ii. 2. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Jan. 7th.)

**What Must I do to be Saved?**—"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Jan. 14th.)

**The Faith that Saves.**—"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30. *Christian World Pulpit*, Jan. 21st.)

**Gordon: Saint and Soldier.**—"Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffer the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may find Christ." Phil. iii. 8. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Jan. 28th.)

**The Seed and the Soil.**—"Hear then ye the parable of the sower." Matt. xiii. 18. (*Family Churchman*, Feb. 6th.)

**Led in Triumph.**—"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." 2 Cor. ii. 14. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Feb. 11th.)

**Meditation on Holy Things.**—"Meditate upon these things." 1 Tim. iv. 15. (*Family Churchman*, Feb. 27th.)

**Disobedience and its Result.**—"Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience." Eph. v. 6. (*Family Churchman*, March 6th.)

**Life's Enigmas in the Light of Easter.**—"For with Thee is the fountain of life: and in Thy light shall we see light." Psalm xxxvi. 9. (*Family Churchman*, April 3rd.)

**Egoism and Altruism: a Contrast.**—"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." James i. 22. (*Christian World Pulpit*, May 13th; *Family Churchman*, May 8th.)

**A Plea for the Children.**—"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. vi. 4. (*Christian World Pulpit*, May 20th.)

**The Path of the Wicked.**—"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men." Prov. iv. 14, 15. (*Family Churchman*, June 19th.)

**What is your Ideal?**—"And God said, Ask what I shall give thee." 1 Kings iii. 5. (*Family Churchman*, July 17th.)

**The First Commandment.**—"Thou shalt have none other gods before Me." Exod. xx. 3. (*Christian World Pulpit*, August 26th; *Family Churchman*, August 28th.)

**The Training of the Law.**—"Whereupon the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." Gal. iii. 24. (*Christian World Pulpit*, August 12th; *Family Churchman*, August 14th.)

**Health and Holiness.**—(*Christian World Pulpit*, August 19th; *Family Churchman*, August 21.)

REV. PROF. R. FLINT, D.D. LL.D.

**The Earth is the Lord's.**—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. i. 1. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Psalm xxiv. 1, 2. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Dec. 24th, 1890.)

REV. J. MONRO GIBSON, D.D.

**Light from Heaven.**—"He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." John xvi. 14. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Oct. 8th, 1890.)

REV. A. GOODRICH, D.D.

**The Love of God.**—"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." John iii. 16. (*The Scottish Pulpit*, Sept. 10th, 1890.)

**Imparting of Spiritual Gifts.**—"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." Rom. i. 11, 12. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Nov. 5th, 1890.)

REV. JOSHUA C. HARRISON.

**Farewell!**—"Finally, brethren, farewell." 2 Cor. xiii. 11. *Christian World Pulpit*, March 25th.)

REV. CANON H. SCOTT-HOLLAND.

**The Historic Pharisee.**—"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican." Luke xviii. 10. (*Family Churchman*, Sept. 4th and 11th, 1890.)

**Canon Liddon. In Memoriam.**—"Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory, etc." Eph. iii. 13-19. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Sept. 17th, 1890.)

**Power to Cast out Devils.**—"Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to Me." Matt. xvii. 17, 18. (*Family Churchman*, Sept. 26th, 1890; *Christian World Pulpit*, Sept. 24th, 1890.)

**The Lesson of St. Michael.**—"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon." Rev. xii. 7-9. (*Family Churchman*, Oct. 2nd, 1890.)

**Spontaneous Tribute of Thanks.**—"And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed?" Luke xvii. 17, 18. 2 sermons. (*Family Churchman*, Oct. 23rd, 1890; *Christian World Pulpit*, Sept. 10th, 1890.)

**The True Epiphany.**—"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isa. lx. 1. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Jan. 14th.)

**All One in Christ.**—"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond or free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. iii. 28. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Jan. 28th; *Family Churchman*, Jan. 30th.)

**Bearing the Cross.**—"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." Luke xiv. 25-7. (*The Cambridge Review*, Feb. 20th.)

**The Name of Jesus.**—"Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John xvi. 23, 24. (*Christian World Pulpit*, May 6th.)

**The Limitless Life.**—"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Gal. iii. 3. (*Christian World Pulpit*, May 20th.)

**The Demand for a Plain Answer.**—"If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." John x. 22-4. (*Family Churchman*, June 5th.)

**The Service of Dogma.**—"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." Gal. i. 6-7. (*Christian World Pulpit*, June 10th.)

REV. R. F. HORTON, M.A.

**A Concrete Christ.**—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." Matt. xxv. 40. *Methodist Times*, Oct. 2nd, 1890.)

REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A.

**Catherine Booth.**—"Your daughters shall prophesy." Acts ii. 17. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Oct. 15th, 1890.)

**The Public and Moral Aspect of the Parnell Case.**—"Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times." Psalm cvi. 3. (*Methodist Times*, Nov. 27th, 1890.)

**The Opium Traffic.**—"Merchandise of horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men." Rev. xviii. 13. (*Methodist Times*, March 19th.)

**The Disciples of Jesus.**—"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts ii. 26. (*Methodist Times*, April 2nd.)

**The Decisive Evidence of Christianity.**—"Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter i. 19. (*Methodist Times*, June 25th.)

REV. HARRY JONES, M.A.

**The Impotence of Numbers.**—"And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel." 1 Chron. xxi. 2. (*Christian World Pulpit*, July 22nd.)

REV. CANON W. J. KNOX-LITTLE.

**The Shadow of the Passion.**—"Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it." Eph. v. 25, 26. (*Family Churchman*, March 27th.)

DR. GEORGE MACDONALD, LL.D.

**The Message to the Laodiceans.**—"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Rev. iii. 20. (*The Scottish Pulpit*, Sept. 17th, 1890.)

REV. W. M. MACGREGOR, M.A.

**As Touching the Conscience.**—"The blood of Christ shall cleanse your conscience." Heb. ix. 14. (*British Weekly*, Sept. 26th, 1890; *Christian World Pulpit*, Jan. 14th.)

REV. ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D.

**The Refuge of the Devout Soul.**—"Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." Psalm xci. 9, 10. (*Freeman*, Sept. 5th, 1890.)

**God's Answer to Man's Trust.**—"Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known My name." Psalm xci. 14. (Sept. 12th.)

**What God will do for us.**—"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble;

I will deliver him and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation." Psalm xci. 15, 16. (Sept. 19th.)

**The Lord of Hosts, the God of Jacob.**—"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." Psalm xlvi. 11. (Sept. 26th.)

**The New Creation.**—"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." Eph. ii. 10. (Oct. 3rd.)

**"Consider Jesus."**—"Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus." Heb. iii. 1. "Consider Him that endured." Heb. xii. 3. (Oct. 10th.)

**Constraining Love.**—"The love of Christ constraineth us." 2 Cor. v. 14. (Oct. 17th.)

**The Perfect Law and its Doers.**—"Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." James i. 25. (Oct. 24th.)

**Christ's Witnesses.**—"Ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke xxiv. 48, 49. (Oct. 31st.)

**The Gifts to the Flock.**—"By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." John x. 9. (Nov. 7th.)

**The Way to the City.**—"The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city." Eccles. x. 15. (Nov. 14th.)

**For the Sake of the Name.**—"For His name's sake. 3 John 7. (Nov. 21st.)

**What the Sight of the Risen Christ makes Life and Death.**—"After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." 1 Cor. xv. 6. (Nov. 28th.)

**The Tree of Life.**—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev. ii. 7. (Dec. 5th.)

**Blessed and Tragic Unconsciousness.**—"Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him." Exod. xxxiv. 29. "And Samson wist not that the Lord was departed from him." Judg. xvi. 20. (Dec. 12th.)

**The Names of the Saviour.**—"Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep." Heb. xiii. 20. (Dec. 19th.)

**Can we make Ourselves Strong?**—"But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." 1 Sam. xxx. 6. (Dec. 26th.)

**River and Rock.**—"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John ii. 17. (Jan. 2nd, 1891.)

**"Be Diligent."**—"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Peter iii. 14. (Jan. 9th.)

**Youth and Age, and the Command for Both.** (Annual Sermon to the Young.)—"When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee,

and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. . . . And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me." John xxi. 18, 19. (Jan. 16th.)

**Vessels of Gold and of Earth.**—"In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21. (Jan. 23rd.)

**Secret Faults.**—"Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from secret faults." Psalm xix. 12. (Jan. 30th.)

**Open Sins.**—"Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." Psalm xix. 13. (Feb. 11th.)

**The Great Pleas of a Great Prayer.**—"The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." Heb. xiii. 20. (Feb. 13th.)

**The Book of Life.**—"I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Rev. iii. 5. (Feb. 20th.)

**The Great Prayer based on Great Pleas.**—"Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." Heb. xiii. 21. (Feb. 27th.)

**The Tree and the Chaff.**—"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth

in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Psalm i. 1. (March 6th.)

**Waking and Sleeping.**—"Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." 1 Thess. v. 10. (March 13th.)

**How Jesus deepened a Shallow Confession.**—"The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." John iii. 2. (March 20th.)

**The Lowliness and Loftiness of Jesus.**—"Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink." "Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He." John iv. 7, 26. (March 27th.)

**The Risen Lord's Greetings and Gifts.**—"And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail!" Matt. xxviii. 9. "Then the same day at evening . . . came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." John xx. 19. (April 3rd.)

**An Outline of the Devout Life.**—"For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways. When men are cast down thou shalt say, . . . lifting up; and He shall save the humble person." Job xxii. 26-9. (April 10th.)

**Where and with Whom Faith Lives.**—"Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living

God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." Heb. xii. 22, 23. (April 17th.)

**Faith's Access to the Judge and His Attendants.**—"Ye are come . . . to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Heb. xii. 23. (April 24th.)

**The Messenger of the Covenant and its Seal.**—"Ye are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Heb. xii. 25. (May 1st.)

**Refusing God's Voice.**—"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." Heb. xii. 25. (May 8th.)

**The Servant-Master.**—"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." John xiii. 3-5. (May 15th.)

**What a Good Man is, and How he Becomes so.**—"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Acts xi. 24. (May 22nd.)

**Christ's Encouragements.**—"Son, be of good cheer." Matt. ix. 2. (May 29th.)

**The Troubled Christ.**—"He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." John xi. 33. (June 5th.)

**Lamps and Bushels.**—"And Jesus said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?" Mark iv. 21. (June 12th.)

**The Hope of the Calling.**—"That ye may know what is the hope of His calling." Eph. i. 18. (June 19th.)

**God's Inheritance in the Saints.**—"That ye may know what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Eph. i. 18. (June 26th.)

**The Measure of Immeasurable Power.**—"That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ." Eph. i. 19, 20. (July 3rd.)

**Calling on the Name of Our Lord.**—"All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." 1 Cor. i. 2. (July 10th.)

**The Great Question and the Plain Answer.**—"He brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts xvi. 30, 31. (July 17th.)

**"The Follies of the Wise."**—"The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light." Luke xvi. 8. (July 24th.)

**The Faith of Moses.**—"He had respect unto the recompense of the reward. . . . He endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Heb. xi. 26, 27. (July 31st.)

**Man's Share in God's Rest.**—"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Heb. iv. 11. (August 7th.)

**Elijah's Translation and Elisha's Deathbed.**—"And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." 2 Kings ii. 12. "And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." 2 Kings xiii. 14. (August 14th.)

**Keeping and Kept.**—"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation." Rev. iii. 10. (August 21st.)

**A Better and an Enduring Substance.**—"Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Heb. x. 34. (August 28th.)

### REV. DONALD MACLEOD, D.D.

**What Christ was and did.**—"Then Jesus answering said unto His disciples, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen, etc." Luke vii. 22. (*Scottish Pulpit*, Sept. 10th, 1890.)

### REV. JOHN McNEILL.

**The Ulterior Reason for Rejoicing.**—"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Luke x. 20. (*The Signal and Gospel Union Gazette*, Jan. 28th.)

**Herod's Fear of John.**—"For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and

observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly." Mark vi. 20. (*The Signal and Gospel Union Gazette*, March 11th, 1890.)

**Going back to Galilee.**—"But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee." Mark xvi. 7. (April 8th.)

**Almost.**—"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets," etc. Acts xxvi. 27-9. (April 15th.)

**Ebenezer.**—"Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." 1 Sam. vii. 12. (May 27th.)

**A Word to Busy People.**—"And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." 1 Kings xx. 40. (June 10th.)

**The Earthly Tent and the Eternal Home.**—"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, etc." 2 Cor. v. 1. (July 15th.)

## REV. GEORGE MATHESON, D.D.

**Room with God.**—"Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind," etc. Luke xiv. 21, 22. (*The Modern Church*, August 2nd.)

## RIGHT REV. J. MOORHOUSE, D.D.,

*Bishop of Manchester.*

**The Inspiration of Scripture.**—"Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth,

but which the Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." 1 Cor. ii. 13. (*Cambridge Review*, Feb. 5th.)

REV. H. C. G. MOULE, M.A.

**The Lordship of Jesus Christ in Life and Death.**—"Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord," etc. Rom. xiv. 8, 9. (*Cambridge Review*, Nov. 13th, 1890.)

REV. W. F. MOULTON, D.D.

**Dr. Osborn's Memorial Sermon.**—"I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." 2 Tim. iv. 6-8. (*Methodist Times*, May 28th.)

REV. ARTHUR MURSELL.

**A Divine Diploma.**—"The voice said, Cry. . . . What shall I cry?" Isa. xl. 6. Gen. xvii. 1. (*Christian World Pulpit*, June 17th.)

REV. CANON NEWBOLT.

**Walking with God.**—"I am the Almighty God: walk before Me, and be ye perfect." (*Christian World Pulpit*, Dec. 10th, 1890.)

REV. CANON F. PAGET, D.D.

**Sin, Death and Law.**—"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." 1 Cor. xv. 56. (*The Oxford Magazine*, Oct. 29th, 1890.)

REV. C. RAY PALMER, D.D.

**John Robinson, the Pilgrim Fathers' Pastor.** (*Christian World Pulpit*, July 29th.)

## REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

**The Teachings of Nature.**—"Doth not even nature itself teach you?" 1 Cor. xi. 14. (*Christian Commonwealth*, Sept. 4th, 1890.)

**Mount Seir.**—Ezek. xxxv.-xxxvi. 15. (Sept. 11th.)

**Dry Bones.**—Ezek. xxxvii. (Sept. 18th.)

**Job's Rational Question.**—"Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?" Job xix. 28. (Sept. 25th.)

**Coming Back Again.**—"He brought us out, . . . that He might bring us in." Deut. vi. 23. (Oct. 2nd.)

**Question and Attitude.**—"They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward." Jer. l. 5. (Oct. 9th.)

**Proportionate Character.**—"Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking [R.V.]; but righteousness, and peace [literally, peaceableness], and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv. 16, 17. (Oct. 16th.)

**Significant Speech.**—"Thy speech bewrayeth thee." Matt. xxvi. 73. (Oct. 23rd.)

**The Unread Vision.**—"And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned." Isa. xxix. 11, 12. (Oct. 30th.)

**Pious at the Wrong Places.**—"Ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God." Luke xi. 42. (Nov. 6th.)

"What is your Life?"—James v. 14. (Nov. 13th.)

The Altar Measurable and Immeasurable.—"These are the measures of the altar after the cubits." Ezek. xliii. 13. (Nov. 20th.)

Cheap Expiations.—"And being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass." Ezra x. 19. (Nov. 27th.)

Apostolic Benedictions.—Rom. xv. 33; xvi. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 22. (Dec. 4th.)

No Need to Depart.—"They need not depart." Matt. xiv. 16. (Dec. 11th.)

The Gospel according to Paul.—"According to my gospel." Rom. ii. 16; xvi. 25. (Dec. 18th.)

"Who is This?"—"All the city was moved, saying, Who is this?" Matt. xxi. 10. (Dec. 25th.)

The Gospel for Christmas.—"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Eph. vi. 24. (Jan. 1st.)

Unanswered Questions.—"And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou?" Job i. 7. (Jan. 8th.)

Barren Fig Tree.—"He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not,

then after that thou shalt cut it down." Luke xiii. 6-9. (Jan. 15th.)

"**To-morrow we Die.**"—"What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." 1 Cor. xv. 32. (Jan. 22nd.)

**The Age we Live in.**—"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Matt. xvi. 3. (Feb. 5th.)

**Death not the Worst that could Happen.**—"It were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void." 1 Cor. ix. 15. (Feb. 12th.)

**Loss of Characteristics.**—"If the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it?" Mark ix. 50. (Feb. 19th.)

**Do the Prophets Believe?**—"Who hath believed our report?" Isa. liii. 1. (Feb. 26th.)

"**This is the Law.**"—Lev. vii. 1. (March 5th.)

**Walking in the Light.**—"Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." John xii. 35. (March 12th.)

**Coming in Distress.**—"Why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?" Jud. xi. 7. (March 19th.)

**Needless Envy.** — "Enviest thou for my sake?" Num. xi. 29. (March 26th.)

"**Where are Samuel and David?**"—1 Sam. xiv. 22. (April 2nd.)

**Philistines Frightened.**—"And the Philistines were afraid." 1 Sam. iv. 7. (April 9th.)

**Presumptuous Service.**—"And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." Num. xvi. 35. (April 16th.)

**Remembered Prayers.**—"I . . . prayed . . . and said." Neh. i. 4, 5. (April 23rd.)

**High as Heaven.**—"As high as heaven; what canst thou do?" Job xi. 8. (April 30th.)

**"Marvellous Lovingkindness."**—Psalm xvii. 7. (May 7th.)

**Great Sights: Great Seers.**—"I will . . . see . . . why." Exod. iii. 3. (May 14th.)

**Double Service.**—"They feared the Lord, and served their own gods." 2 Kings xvii. 33. (May 21st.)

**Conscious Kingship.**—"For do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?" 2 Sam. xix. 22. (May 28th.)

**Religion Made Easy.**—"It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." 2 Kings xii. 28. (June 4th.)

**An Old-time Custom.**—"They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter." 2 Sam. xx. 18. (une 11th.)

**Self-multiplication.**—"I was eyes to the blind." Job xxix. 15. (June 18th.)

**The Highest Distinction.**—"The saints that are in the earth." Psalm xvi. 3. (June 25th.)

**Sin's Garden.**—"Renew our days as of old." Lam. v. 21. (July 2nd.)

**Ancient Things.**—"And these are ancient things." 1 Chron. iv. 22. (July 9th.)

**Revelation Always New.**—"O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness." Deut. iii. 24. (July 16th.)

**Identifications.**—"These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the Lord said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies." Exod. vi. 26. (July 23rd.)

**Great Answers.**—John ix. (July 30th.)

**According to Ability.**—"And he shall offer . . . such as he can get." Lev. xiv. 30. (August 6th.)

**Able to Fight.**—"All that are able to go forth to war." Num. i. 3. (August 13th.)

**The Double Vision.**—"He that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me." John xii. 45. (August 20th.)

**Divine Expostulation.**—"Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11. (August 27th.)

### REV. MARK GUY PEARSE.

**Our Business, and How to do It.**—"And he brought them to Jesus." John i. 42. (*Methodist Times*, Oct. 30th, 1890.)

**The Advantages of Common People.**—"The common people heard Him gladly." Mark xii. 37. (*Methodist Times*, Dec. 11th, 1890.)

### REV. J. S. PEROWNE, D.D.

**Honesty with the Bible.**—"From a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Oct. 22nd, 1890.)

RIGHT REV. HENRY PHILPOTT, D.D.,
*Bishop of Worcester.*

**The Spirit of Truth.**—"He will guide you into all truth." John xvi. 13. (*Family Churchman*, May 22nd.)

REV. DR. JOHN PULSFORD.

**The Adorable Man and his Reproductive Power.**—"Prayer shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top, etc." Psalm lxxii. 15, 16. (*The Christian Commonwealth*, July 9th.)

**Communion with Ourselves.**—"I commune with mine own heart; and my spirit made diligent search." Psalm lxxvii. 6. "Take heed to yourselves." Luke xxi. 34. (*Christian World Pulpit*, August 26th.)

REV. PRINCIPAL H. R. REYNOLDS, D.D.

**Great Faith the Measure of Blessing.**—"Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Matt. xv. 28. (*Christian World Pulpit*, June 10th.)

REV. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A.

**Mrs. Booth, Mother of the Salvation Army.**—"A succourer of many." Rom. xvi. 2. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Oct. 15th, 1890; *Methodist Times*, Oct. 16th and 23rd.)

**In Memoriam: the late Dr. Hannay.**—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matt. v. 8. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Nov. 26th, 1890.)

**John Wesley.**—"He gave some evangelists. Eph. iv. 11. (*Christian World Pulpit,* March 18th.)

## REV. CANON TEIGNMOUTH SHORE.

**A Farewell Charge.**—"Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you." Josh. xxiii. 14. (*Family Churchman,* May 1st.)

## REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

*From the "Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit."*

**Self Low, but Christ High.**—"The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Matt. viii. 8. (No. 2161.)

**And why not Me?**—"Behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Matt. viii. 2, 3. (No. 2162.)

**Immanuel—The Light of Life.**—"Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Isa. ix. 1, 2. (No. 2163.)

**Faith's Firm Resolve.**—"I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only." Psalm lxxi. 16. (No. 2164.)

**The Serpent's Sentence.**—"And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. iii. 14, 15. (No. 2165.)

**Experience and Assurance.**—"Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." Psalm lxiii. 7. (No. 2166.)

**Jehovah's Valuation of His People.**—"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." Isa. xliii. 3. (No. 2167).

**The Test of Taste.**—"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." 1 Peter ii. 3. (No. 2168.)

**The Man who shall never see Death.**—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and Thou sayest, If a man keep My saying, he shall never taste of death. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest Thou Thyself?" John viii. 51-3. (No. 2169.)

**The Blessing of the High Priest.**—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children

of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them." Num. vi. 22-7. (No. 2170.)

**Runaway Jonah and the Convenient Ship.**—"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish." Jonah i. 3. (No. 2171.)

**Patient Job and the Baffled Enemy.**—"In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Job i. 22. (No. 2172.)

**Little Faith and Great Faith.**—"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matt. xiv. 31. "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Matt. xv. 28. (No. 2173.)

**Fever, and its Cure.**—"And He arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever: and they besought Him for her, and He stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them." Luke iv. 38, 39. (No. 2174.)

**"So it is."**—"Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good." Job v. 27. (No 2175.)

**The Lord no more Wroth with His People.**—"For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." Isa. liv. 9. (No. 2176.)

**Camp Law and Camp Life.**—"For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy; that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee." Deut. xxiii. 14. (No. 2177.)

**Zedekiah; or, the Man who cannot say "*NO.*"**—"Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand; for the king is not he that can do anything against you." Jer. xxxviii. 5. (No. 2178.)

**God Fighting Sin.**—"But they rebelled, and vexed His holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them. Isa. lxiii. 10. (No. 2179.)

**A Mediator.**—"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one." Gal. iii. 20. (No. 2180.)

**God Forgiving Sin.**—"He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isa. lv. 7-9. (No. 2181.)

**Jehovah-Shammah: a Glorious Name for the New Year.**—"The name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there [or in the Hebrew 'Jehovah-shammah']." Ezek. xlviii. 35. (No. 2182.)

**A Gracious Dismissal.**—"And He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Luke vii. 50. (No. 2183.)

**A Private Enquiry.**—"What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee?" 1 Sam. iii. 17. (No. 2184.)

**Our Manifesto.**—"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man." Gal. i. 11. (No. 2185.)

**Our Expectation.**—"He shall see His seed." Isa. liii. 10. (No. 2186.)

**Jesus: "All Blessing and all Blest."**—"Men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed." Psalm lxxii. 17. (No. 2187.)

**Entangled in the Land.**—"For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in." Exod. xiv. 3. (No. 2188).

**A Call to Prayer and Testimony.**—"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Isa. lxii. 6, 7. (No. 2189.)

**Bit and Bridle: How to Escape Them.**—"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." Psalm xxxii. 8, 9. (No. 2190.)

**Believing on Jesus, and its Counterfeits.**—"As He spake these words, many believed on Him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John viii. 30-32. (No. 2191.)

**The Joyous Return.**—"O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy." Hosea xiv. 1-3. (No. 2192.)

**A Poor Man's Cry, and what Came of It.**—"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." Psalm xxxiv. 6. (No. 2193.)

**Between the two Appearings.**—"Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. ix. 26-8. (No. 2194.)

**The Obedience of Faith.**—"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Heb. xi. 8. (No. 2195.)

**Hosanna!**—"And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." Matt. xxi. 9. (No. 2196.)

**Christ's Resurrection and our Newness of Life.**—"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into

death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. vi. 4. (No. 2197.)

**The Census of Israel.**—"These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun." Num. xxvi. 63-5. (No. 2198.)

**Israel's Hope; or, the Centre of the Target.**—"Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption." Psalm cxxx. 7. (No. 2199.)

**The Covenant Promise of the Spirit.**—"And I will put My spirit within you." Ezek. xxxvi. 27. (No. 2200.)

**The Sword of the Spirit.**—"Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Eph. vi. 17. (No. 2201.)

**"Lo, I come": Exposition.**—"Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm xl. 6-8. (No. 2202.)

**"Lo, I come": Application.**—"Then said I, Lo, I come." Psalm xl. 7. (No. 2203.)

**Sin: Its Spring-head, Stream and Sea.**—"Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red sea." Psalm cvi. 7. (No. 2204.)

**"My Times are in Thy Hand."**—"My times are in thy hand." Psalm xxxi. 15. (No. 2205.)

**"Am I a Sea, or a Whale?"**—"Am I a sea, or a whale, that Thou settest a watch over me?" Job vii. 12. (No. 2206.)

**Redemption Through Blood, the Gracious Forgiveness of Sins.**—"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Eph. i. 7. (No. 2207.)

**The Statute of David for the Sharing of the Spoil.**—"And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. For who will hearken unto

you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day." 1 Sam. xxx. 21-5. (No. 2208.)

**The Best Strengthening Medicine.**—"Out of weakness were made strong." Heb. xi. 34. (No. 2209.)

**The Agreement of Salvation by Grace with Walking in Good Works.**—"Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. ii. 9, 10. (No. 2210.)

**God Rejoicing in the New Creation.**—"Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people." Isa. lxv. 17-19. (No. 2211.)

**The Private Thoughts and Words of Jesus.**—"And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again." Matt. xx. 17-19. (No. 2212.)

**"Honey in the Mouth!"**—"He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.

All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." John xvi. 14, 15. (No. 2213.)

**Barriers Broken Down.**—"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Rom. x. 3. (No. 2214.)

**Young Man! A Prayer for You.**—"And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." 2 Kings vi. 17. (No. 2215.)

**The Lad's Loaves in the Lord's Hands.**—"Jesus took the loaves." John vi. 11. (No. 2216.)

**Three Names high on the Muster-roll.**—"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Dan. iii. 16-18. (No. 2217.)

**"Is the Spirit of the Lord Straitened?"**—"O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?" Micah ii. 7. (No. 2218.)

**A Harp of Ten Strings.**—"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Luke i. 46, 47. (No. 2219.)

**Three Decisive Steps.**—"And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only: and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord." 1 Sam. vii. 2-5. (No. 2220.)

**The First Last, and the Last First.**—"But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." Matt. xix. 30. "So the last shall be first, and the first last." Matt. xx. 16. (No. 2221.)

## REV. JAMES STALKER, D.D.

**A Biography in Three Words.**—"Jacob My servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: . . . and thou Jesurun, whom I have chosen." Isa. xliv. 1, 2. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Oct. 15th, 1890.

**God's Gospel for Man.**—"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. i. 30. (*Christian World Pulpit*, Jan. 28th.)

**Christ's Teaching about Himself.**—"Whom say ye that I am?" Matt. xvi. 15. (*The Modern Church*, August 13th.)

VERY REV. DEAN VAUGHAN, D.D.

**Entering into other Men's Labours.**—"Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours." John iv. 37, 38. (*Family Churchman*, Nov. 7th, 1890.)

**God's Faithful Steward.**—"And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" Luke xvi. 12. (*Family Churchman*, July 31st.)

RIGHT REV. BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT, D.D.,
*Bishop of Durham.*

**The Church's Duty in India.**—"Ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." John xv. 27. (*Christian World Pulpit* May 13th.)

VEN. ARCHDEACON J. M. WILSON, M.A.

**Shining Lights.**—"Let your light so shine before men.' Matt. v. 16. (*Cambridge Review*, Oct. 23rd, 1890.)

RIGHT REV. J. WORDSWORTH, D.D.,
*Bishop of Salisbury.*

**An Example for Lent.**—"John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil." Luke vii. 33-5. (*Family Churchman*, Feb. 20th.)

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